

RESEARCH REPORT

**EXAMINING MORALITY AND CORRUPTION IN SOUTH AFRICAN POST-
APARTHEID CONTEMPORARY DRAMA: A CASE OF THREE DRAMAS.**

by

THELA, BONGANI CLEARANCE

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SUPERVISOR: Ms D.L. WATT-GOWANS

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DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to:

- myself for the hard work that I have put for success of this study.
- my beloved grandmother, Annah Khabonina Thela, for her endless love and support, both financially, morally and spiritually in ensuring that I become a better man in this world.

DECLARATION

I declare that **EXAMINING MORALITY, CORRUPTION AND CLASS ISSUES IN SOUTH AFRICAN POST-APARTHEID CONTEMPORARY DRAMA – A CASE OF THREE DRAMAS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

Bongani Clearance Thela

17 / 11 / 2017

Full names

Date

██████████

Student number

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Signature

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine South Africa's Post-Apartheid contemporary drama. Three dramas were used in order to examine three primary themes namely morality, corruption and class - the selected plays were John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth*, Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* and Mike van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*. The ideology carried out in this study was that there is a possible reinvention of Apartheid issues in Post-Apartheid South African drama, exchanging themes of protest and race for morality and corruption, while reflecting real events in the works of playwrights. Also, the study aimed at finding out whether there are connections between class issues and morality as presented in the selected plays. The study found that there is indeed a reinvention of Apartheid issues in Post-Apartheid South Africa, and that there are connections between class issues and morality, including corruption. Lastly, the study concluded that the current South Africa requires a serious intervention regarding moral regeneration as reflected in the selected plays.

KEY CONCEPTS

Morality; Corruption; Class; Plutocracy; Post-Apartheid; Values; Tradition; Virginity.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXTUALISATION

1.1 TITLE

Examining Morality, Corruption and Class issues in South African Post-Apartheid Contemporary Drama – A Case of Three Dramas

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Many South African creative writers such as Maishe Maponya, Zakes Mda, Athol Fugard and John Kani among others, protested against the unfair Apartheid system through writing about the issues that were a concern during the period. Some were: race in terms of skin colour; protest; child labour and police brutality, all of which are well illustrated in Maishe Maponya's famous play *The Hungry Earth* (1993). My idea is that playwrights of the Apartheid era reflected real events in their works. Similarly, Post-Apartheid playwrights reflect reality events in their works – some of the issues that they explore are morality, corruption, class and gender. Morality and corruption have been defined in various disciplines; this makes these concepts broad and complex to define. However, the current study seeks explore these concepts as themes; it uses morality as an umbrella theme which serves as a framework to discuss corruption.

This study recognises that Post-Apartheid in the South African context may be classified into periods as pointed out by Jamal (2009:2). For example, there is the Pre-Post-Apartheid period which dates from 1990 to 1996; the early-Post-Apartheid period which dates from 1996 to 2002 and the Post-Apartheid period which dates from 2002 to 2008 (Homann, 2009:2). As Homann's anthology was published in 2009, now one poses the question, what should one call the period which dates from '2009 to 2017' or to the current period? The current study proposes that it should be called the 'Post-Apartheid Plutocracy' period.

In substantiating the concept suggested above, Debs (1891) cites the Mariam-Webster online dictionary which defines plutocracy as 'a form of government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of the wealthy classes; government by the rich.' The reason I suggest that this period should be called a plutocratic one, is because plutocracy is connected with class issues, and the current study adopts class as a theme to be studied; moreover, the wealthy people who are in government seem to commit corruption through the abuse of power and they are able to escape justice since they are the ones who make the laws, and are more powerful than the ordinary citizens. Therefore, I believe that Post-Apartheid Plutocracy period works well as a description of this period dated from 2009-2016.

The current study is a continuation of a previous Honours Research Report titled *A comparative study of Apartheid and Post-Apartheid drama – exploring some race, protest, and health issues in Zakes Mda's Our Lady of Benoni and Maishe Maponya's The Hungry Earth*, and concentrates mainly on Post-Apartheid dramas with the aim of revealing current themes explored by playwrights in this period; the themes I will study are morality, corruption and the way in which it is presented in class and gender issues.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In light the above discussions, the problem noted in this study is the possible reinvention of Apartheid issues in Post-Apartheid South African drama, exchanging themes of protest and race for morality and corruption, while reflecting real events in the works of the playwrights. This means that the 'new' democratic South Africa that most South Africans sought in 1994 when the country became a democracy, and the late Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first black president, is not the same South Africa that everyone living in it anticipated. People sought a country that was free from, among others, protest issues, race issues, and immoral acts such as corruption including discriminatory acts in terms of class and gender. One may assume that there seems to be a new form of Apartheid in the country since there are a number of similar grievances among members of the society. For example, the Apartheid system was seen as inhuman because it discriminated against black people – this is the case with

the new democratic South Africa; citizens are discriminated against or differentiated because of their class or financial status. Moreover, corruption issues such as crime in terms of fraud have enslaved many ordinary South Africans; hence, a new form of Apartheid. Creative writers expose some of these issues in their art of writing. Although this is not a sociological study, but a study of drama, the events occurring in the selected plays are common to that of society – most of examples will be made from the plays and some will be from a real societal context. The current study will examine issues of morality, corruption and class Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* (2012), John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* (2002), and Mike van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons* (2009) in order to examine morality and corruption and make recommendations in the end.

The drama texts used in this study will be classified in terms of the period or the time in which they are set in order to support with evidence the arguments to be undertaken in the study. In summary, the significance of this study is that it will add value to the literature available in the field. Also, it addresses current issues; this makes it relevant to interested scholars and emerging scholars in the field of literary studies.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.4.1 Morality

Morality is generally concerned with the bad and the evil, or the right and the wrong. In his essay *Morality as/in Performance – An Exploration of Morality within the Framework of Performance Studies, with a Case-Study on Medieval Morality Drama and Ancient Greek Tragedy* – Jucan (n.d.:2) defines morality as 'the site of the creation and negotiation of a paradigmatic code of behaviour in relation to which all behaviour (within specific socio-historical contexts) is e-value-ated and legitimised in terms of good or evil, right/wrong, or just/unjust, with a view to regulating the relationships between the self and other(s).' This means that Jucan (n.d.:3) perceives morality as a set of rules which individuals agree upon. This may be cognitive rather than normative.

Morality is much more than measuring the good and the bad in a play or more broadly in a society; it is a broad concept to be crammed into the small unit of a definition; hence, Shavell (2002:227) approaches the debate of morality from a legal perspective – he notes that the manner in which morality is measured is the same manner in which the law is measured. He states that ‘both law and morality serve to channel our behaviour’ (Shavell, 2002:227). This means that morality is measured by the behaviour of an individual. In van Graan’s play *Some Mother’s Sons* issues of morality are seen through discussion of the ‘fantastic constitution’ as described by Braam, a character in the play, yet he states that there is no justice to ensure that those who commit crime are put behind bars – this is due to immoral acts by the leaders in courts and other government officials.

1.4.2 Corruption

Morality and corruption seem to be some of the themes which are particularly explored by Post-Apartheid playwrights. The current South Africa is faced with many challenges in terms of corruption; hence, playwrights such as Mda, Kani and van Graan among others have chosen to expose these issues in their writing. The current study debates issues of corruption considered in the three plays. This part of the essay looks into various definitions of corruption in order come up with the most relevant one for the study.

Firstly, let us look at what Khan (1997) suggests a good definition of corruption would be. In his paper *Political and Administrative Corruption: Concepts, Comparative Experiences and Bangladesh Case*, Khan points out that there are ambiguities in meaning in terms of defining corruption, he states that there are a number of approaches with regard to the definition, and this may be due to the number of schools of thought that are available. Nonetheless, this study will focus on a moralist school of thought namely, the Moralism School. Khan (1997) cites Gould who defines corruption from a moralist perspective, and states that moralists view corruption as an:

immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society, causing loss of respect for and confidence in duly constituted authority. (Gould, 1991:468)

From this definition, it is evident that moralists measure corruption in terms of what is good or bad – in addition, morals of individuals in a society are evaluated in terms of their behaviour.

In light of the above discussions, it can be seen that corruption takes place in different aspects of life. However, the link between the definition adopted above and the current study is that the study will focus on societal issues as shown by the playwright through the characters in the selected plays. Also, some of the discussions will relate to the powerful characters who are of the same rank as government officials, hence, Balboa and Medalla (2006:4) add that ‘corruption is nurtured by politicians who coddle supporters and followers, who in turn pressure them to engage in corruption to spread the benefits of a corrupt regime.’

For example, van Graan’s *Some Mother’s Sons* addresses issues of corruption in a contemporary South Africa – he uses his characters to reveal that the constitution of the country is good enough to control issues of corruption, yet as per the latter argument that says ‘corruption is nurtured by politicians’ (Balboa & Medalla, 2006:4), it is clear that government officials play a major role in influencing these issues of corruption. van Graan uses Braam to reveal this idea:

You know the statics, Vusi! Twenty thousand murders a year, and less than fifteen per cent convictions. Thousands of children and women raped every year, and less than ten per cent of the perpetrators are brought to book. We’ve got a great Constitution! Fantastic laws to protect everyone. Just no fucking justice! (van Graan, 2009:88)

This quotation does not only question issues of corruption, it also questions the issues of class, this is evident where some people are able to get out freely without being charged for their crimes because they have got good lawyers and support from the masses. However, this part of the study is primarily concerned with issues of corruption; the fact that a person is able to afford good lawyers adds value to issues of corruption since that particular individual is fully aware that he or she can indulge in any kind of corruption; he or she will be free from the kind of crimes committed.

Some literary critics such as Khan and Gould maintain that corruption is not only the obvious events that we see in the public, it also concerns issues of principles – this means that what is corrupt to one person, may not be corrupt to another person. This leads the discussion to Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*. Professor and Ma-Dlomo are talking about virginity testing issues as part of culture in Kwazulu Natal, the two argue and Professor tells how the community in KZN ill-treated him and his girlfriend Thabisile. He further tells of real cases wherein some young women were murdered because of the culture of virginity testing; now, murder is a crime and a crime is corruption – it appears that some traditions or cultures have an impact on issues of corruption, these include the issue of rape which apparently still happens in KZN, referred to as '*ukuthwala*' – in this case a man would pick a random young lady and rape her, that way he could marry her. In summary, issues of corruption may also be influenced by tradition as seen in Mda's literary version where issues of virginity testing are valued greatly in the community, and this tradition results in the women who lose their virginity into feeling worthless in the society.

1.4.3 Class

Morality and corruption cannot be studied in isolation – these concepts contain a broad scope of definition – the terms will be examined with regard to class issues in order to investigate complementary elements which determine issues of morality and corruption. However, South Africa's issues of discrimination seem to have shifted from that of race, as it was during Apartheid times into discrimination in terms of class today. This part of the study seeks to define the concept of class as it will be used in this study. Atkinson and

Brandolini (2011:1) argue that the concept of class ‘requires the examination of other dimensions beyond income’. With reference to the latter statement, dimensions refer to geographic and social position or political standing and moral perspective that an individual holds in a community. However, some sociologists identify this phenomenon as ‘any group of citizens who share the equitable socioeconomic conditions’ (Tarkhnishvili & Tarkhnishvili, 2013:24); In their essay, the two distinguish some factors between the upper, middle and lower classes – and they maintain that these determine the social standards of a community or society. In relation to this study, I will look into the different classes in the plays with regard to societal effects on the notion of class, this exploration will also look into the kind of influence that culture and tradition has on issues of class.

The argument here is that class issues are not only dependent on one’s income but it may also vary according to rank at work, in the community and in any other environment which is composed of people with different roles.

In this study class issues are explored in terms of economic gain and power. For example, it seems that because of the fact that one is able to afford a lawyer, one is able to commit some crimes and not get convicted, this is sign that class issues are influential in the current South Africa. This is the case with the MaDlomo in Mda’s *Our Lady of Benoni*; who is also seen as somebody with high profile in KZN because of the traditional work that she does there – being a virginity tester is a significant role to maintain in KZN, so this makes her symbolic in the public – any possible crime or corruption by her may be contested in her favour.

1.5 THE SELECTED PLAYS

1.5.1 John Kani’s *Nothing but the Truth*

Firstly, the title of Kani’s *Nothing but the Truth* (2002) suggests a confession of truths. Among other things, the play suggests that it can be difficult to reveal secrets hidden for years and to understand and accept them. However, the process can be healing and it

can help us to move on from unpleasant past issues. This applies to the characters in the play as well as to South Africa as a whole during and after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process. The playwright also explores issues of African traditions in the play. This is seen when Sipho argues that he wants to bury his brother, Themba, with dignity, in an African way whereas the brother wanted to be cremated. Therefore, Kani's play will ensure the achievement of the primary aims and objectives of this study. In order to achieve the objectives of this research report, the study will closely examine the events occurring in the drama, especially those that are complementary to themes explored in this study; and further consider the primary themes of the playwright.

1.5.2 Mike van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*

van Graan's play addresses the judicial system of the current South Africa. What he is saying in the play is that there is no equality. For example, the constitution favours the rich only, if one is poor and is unable to afford a lawyer to represent oneself in a court of law; one will be sentenced to serve a longer period in jail than is usual – these kinds of laws enable government officials to continue with their crimes since they know that they afford good legal representation. The moral vision of this playwright seems to be the desire to address issues of the corrupted justice system of our country.

1.5.3 Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*

In his drama, Mda seems to expose immoral behaviour using his characters in relation to real events. For example, he uses the 2005, Zuma rape trial to expose some immoralities in his drama. Among other things, he presents his readers with issues of tradition – he speaks about the notion of virginity testing and the way in which it is valued in KZN – these issues seek to reveal issues of class and gender as perceived from a traditional perspective. The latter arguments will be broadly discussed in chapter two of the study. For example, Mda has confessed to a journalist of the City Press that the things he talks about his play are taken from real life:

So you see, all those things are from real life, they are not from my imagination. I wrote this play, unlike the things that I write such as the novels, specifically with the intention to teach, with the intention to say: 'Hey these are the strange things that I've discovered; I want to share them with you.' (du Plessis, 2014).

In summary, it will be seen that Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* addresses issues of gender inequalities and corruption.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The impact of colonisation seems to have influence in the transition of South Africa's theatre. Most of the events that playwrights are exploring in their works are issues that evolve from Apartheid times. Hence, the study does analysis of the selected texts, and does this from the perspective of the themes explored and the characters' views, opinions and actions as depicted in the plays. However, the main theoretical framework used in this study is Moral Criticism which is embodied in the school of literary criticism. In their course guide of English studies at the National Open University of Nigeria, Gbenoba, Kehinde and Iwuchukwu (2014:157) state that the term literary criticism does not imply approaching literary texts negatively, or finding fault in one's literary work; rather,

it tries to interpret specific works of literature and also helps us to identify and understand different ways of examining and interpreting them. The study of literary criticism contributes to maintenance of high standards of literature. In our day-to-day life, the study of criticism of literary works enables us to become aware of the present and past works of literature.

Therefore, this study uses moral criticism in order 'to become aware' (Gbenoba et al., 2014:157) of events occurring in works of literature while examining morality, corruption and class. Moral criticism is concerned with the good and the bad; this means that it evaluates literature with regard to the moral and immoral acts portrayed by the

characters. Hence, the current study will concentrate on whether the themes identified and their connection to real events reveal moral or immoral behaviour. Also, these judgements will be made by judging the isolated behaviour of the characters rather than judging the writing on moral grounds (Gillespie, 2010). In addition, the theory will enable me to judge the plays within their context as argued by the Greek philosopher Aristotle that

we can't judge a play on single events or behaviours within it but must look at the context of the whole work for how it dramatically demonstrates complex moral dilemmas and consequences. Moral decisions are often made in difficult, complicated, and ambiguous circumstances (Gillespie, 2010:162).

Therefore, I believe that using this theory as a framework will ensure the achievement of the paramount mandate of the study.

1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the current study is to discover whether morality and corruption have replaced protest and race as issues of concern in post-Apartheid South African drama. The themes to be examined are morality, corruption and class. Seeing that morality and corruption are terminologies that are interrelated, the study uses the concept of morality as an umbrella word; this means that the other two themes identified in the study are highly dependent on morality. Therefore, the purpose is to examine the events occurring in the plays and connect them to reality in order to suggest measures that determine moral and immoral acts with reference to corruption and class in a societal context, and as presented in the dramas.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- I. Do South African Post-Apartheid playwrights reflect real events of morality and corruption in their works?

- II. What do the current themes (morality, corruption and class) suggest about Post-Apartheid South Africa?
- III. Are there connections between class issues and morality as presented in the plays?

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Scientific research methods assist researchers in finding solutions to a problem in a study, also, they enable them to explain issues in a study based on 'collected facts, measurements and observations and not on reasoning alone' (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2013:5). This study was motivated by observations and it seeks to argue and support those observations by providing facts from the selected plays. Therefore, the study uses a thematic exploration and character analysis approach. Moreover, this method acknowledges that people have different approaches when looking at real events; this is the case in this study. I will examine the themes identified earlier according to the way in which I perceive reality as guided by the playwrights' plays and intentions. In summary, the qualitative research method will add value by ensuring objectivity in the study since it is also concerned with content analysis

1.9.1 Research Design

The research design to be used in this study is content analysis. In their essay entitled Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis, Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) quote Rosegren (1981) who points out that 'content analysis describes a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analysis to systematic, strict textual analysis.' This definition notes that content analysis research design is concerned with the body of a text among other things, similarly, the current study mainly focuses on the analysis of three plays with the objective of revealing the authors' intentions and themes of the dramas. Therefore, this research design will add credibility to the analysis which will be made and will ensure assistance in the breaking-down of complex items and smaller segments in the plays (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:11).

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the primary aim of this study is to examine morality, corruption and class issues in South African contemporary dramas. The study will explore and expose any immoral acts presented by playwrights in their works, and this will generally require people to consider whether the South Africa that ordinary citizens anticipated is a reality or a dream. Secondly and most importantly, this study will add value to the body of material available in the study of drama; hence, this will enable literary scholars to gain more knowledge about Post-Apartheid creative writings and their objectives. Lastly, the study will build on criticism of the plays and hopefully, it may assist in rebuilding a country that is morally conscious.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The collapse of Apartheid seems to have paved way for the emergence of new forms of writing concerning the themes addressed by playwrights in Post-Apartheid South African drama. Morality, corruption and class seem to be some of the dominant themes in current writing. In her research report *Exploring and Exploding – Using theatre as a medium to confront racial tensions between Indian and black South Africans*, Moodley (2013:21) explores 'South African playwriting and the way the story was being continued in theatre.' The exploration is prompted by the South African playwright Mike van Graan who inquisitively asks questions as to 'how would the story end?' after the collapse of Apartheid. Moodley further cites Greg Homann who explains that:

in the early 1990s, the period of transition in which South Africa became a democratic society, "Theatre makers were at a loss. The long-standing routine of creating protest-styled work was no longer relevant. Questions like: 'What now?', 'What are our stories?', and 'What is theatre's function in this new society?' emerged, leaving well-established playwrights and theatre-makers puzzled about what to reflect upon" (2009: 3).

In light of the above discussions, Moodley (2013) uses the word *story* to refer to the events which were explored in theatre during Apartheid times. Moreover, one may suggest that playwrights such as Mike van Graan, Zakes Mda, and John Kani were at some point puzzled with regard to issues that they were expected to continue writing about since the Apartheid regime had fallen. However, these playwrights have shifted from the Apartheid period's style of writing, and are now concerned with Post-Apartheid issues. This means that Post-Apartheid playwrights no longer explore discriminatory issues with reference to skin colour, for example, they explore discriminatory issues with reference to economic statuses of individuals in societies.

The current study seeks to examine morality, corruption and class as issues of concern in Post-Apartheid theatre. Consequently, this chapter will give definitions from various disciplines thereby revealing the relationship between the definitions and the ideology undertaken herein. Firstly, the chapter gives a brief story outline of the selected plays by John Kani, Zakes Mda and Mike van Graan. The chapter proceeds to give a broader discussion on the theoretical framework in order to reveal its relevance to the study and the proposed themes, as well as the plays. In addition, the concept of plutocracy as proposed in chapter one of the study mentions that the concept will be developed by providing various definitions from various scholars in the area, as well as providing some relevant examples.

2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE

This part of the essay discusses a brief development of South Africa's theatre. Although the study is concerned with three theatrical plays set in a Post-Apartheid period, it discusses the development from Apartheid times until current times.

Among other roles, theatre has been a practical channel for mobilising people and their ideologies since it 'took the politics and methods of expression from outside and brought them onto the stage' (Penfold, 2013:192). When used as a channel for the communication of ideas, and the need to raise awareness, theatre seems to have played a significant role in raising awareness in South Africa.

The struggle against Apartheid in South Africa saw a rise in the use of theatre as a medium of protest against some of those injustices. However, Hauptfleisch (2007:1) traces back the development of theatre to what he terms the 'three basic phases' namely the 'Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial' phases which date from 1652 to the current year, respectively. In order to remain within the scope of this study, concentration will be given to recent years rather than to dwell much on the early years of theatre in South Africa; this means that concentration will be given on the years after

colonialism to the recent years. Specifically, the discussions will concentrate on the role played by the playwrights in combating Apartheid in South Africa.

In his *A History of South African Literature*, Heywood (2004:72) explains that 'theatre is a world that challenges and reconstructs the world'; similarly, Panday (2004:1) states that South African theatre 'has always been a vehicle through which the voice[s] of South Africans, irrespective of race, could be heard.' This advocates that theatre has played – and still plays – a significant role in mobilising the thoughts of ordinary citizens in a country. For example, theatre played a pivotal role in South Africa in the fight against the Apartheid system. However, Heywood (2004:178) notes that among other playwrights, Athol Fugard, Pieter-Dirk Uys and Zakes Mda played a vital role in the development of playwriting against the Apartheid system, hence he states that the involvement of these playwrights 'resulted in the South African theatre of today.' There is no doubt that Fugard and Mda are exceptionally good writers. Also, Panday (2004:1) cites Blumberg and Walder (1999:1) who add to the list of the playwrights who contributed in the development of theatre in the South Africa during the Apartheid times, Gcina Mhlophe, Barney Simon, John Kani and Mbongeni Ngema among others. With evidence, it can be seen that some of these playwrights such as Mda and Kani still contribute in Post-Apartheid South African theatre; this list includes van Graan. These renowned playwrights have engaged 'immediate issues of Apartheid through collaborative techniques which have crossed race and class boundaries' (Blumberg & Walder, 1999:1), and some of these playwrights continue to challenge 'immediate issues' of the Post-Apartheid South Africa. In the latter argument, 'immediate issues' refer to the issues occurring at a time, respectively transiting from Apartheid times to the current times.

With regard to the development of theatre studies in South Africa, the dissertation closely studies Panday's *Singing for the Fatherland: Four South African Protest Plays* (2004) submitted for his Master of Arts degree. In the essay, Panday (2004:1) examines what he terms 'the historical context of South Africa from colonialism, through the years of Apartheid.' This means that he examines the effects of colonialism which resulted in many injustices of inequality in the country. Also, he 'explores the effects of Apartheid

[and] the physical and psychological damage' caused by Apartheid among the citizens. Lastly, he 'addresses the importance of theatre in Post-Apartheid South Africa' (Panday, 2004:2). In light of the outline of Panday's dissertation, one may argue that the development of theatre in South Africa depended on these issues. The renowned playwrights identified earlier in the study wrote about these issues, thus this supports the notion of playwrights reflecting real events in their writing or work.

In his thesis *Singing for the Fatherland: Four South African Protest Plays*, Panday explains that Steve Biko proclaimed the significance of drama as a channel to mobilise or liberate South Africa – this is cited in Kavanagh (1985:162) whereby Biko was concerned with injustices of Apartheid which faced black people at the time, Biko proclaimed that 'the adoption of black theatre and drama is one such which we need to encourage and to develop.' Therefore, it can be seen from these arguments that theatre during Apartheid leading to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was based on the struggles to combat Apartheid in South Africa.

In respect of the above discussions, the study examines theatrical works after independence in South Africa; it is in this regard that Edson (2006:1) speaks about 'issuing with practice and offering an alternative [because] for decades South African (SA) authors have restricted their writing to mostly that of protest' as is the case in most pre-1994 works of theatre studies – now, what Edson is arguing about is that there has got to be a shift in the issues of concern. 'Issuing with practice' means that playwrights ought to practically start writing about current issues rather recognising these issues and not write or do anything about them. Therefore, this study looks into three plays written and set in a post-1994 context in order to determine the changes in the development of theatre with regard to the issues addressed since the emergence of theatre in South Africa. Because playwrights reflect immediate issues in their art, this study limits these issues to those of morality, corruption and class; these are social issues, consequently, one may argue that Post-Apartheid playwrights are more concerned with economic issues, educational issues and class issues, as is the case in this study, rather than with political issues which relate to Apartheid. This argument is

buttressed by Panday (2004:72) when he states that 'South African playwrights no longer have to feel pressed into addressing political issues, they now address issues that affect South African[s] in whatever context and it still continue to entertain, empower, and educate.' It can be seen that there is an urgent need for South African theatre artists to take a completely different stand in terms of the issues that they explore in their art.

2.3 SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAYS

2.3.1 John Kani's *Nothing But The Truth*

Chapter one of this study acknowledges that Kani's play is dominated by traditional or cultural events. Van Heerden (2008:166) argues that events in Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* 'revolve around the return [to South Africa] of the younger brother's remains to be buried. The younger brother is Themba Makhaya who died in exile. Van Heerden adds that 'Sipho [the older brother who remained at home in South Africa] plans a traditional burial amongst their ancestors to honour his brother, but what his Anglicised niece [Mandisa] brings back from London is not her father's body, but a small urn full of ashes' (2008:167). One may argue that the arrival of Mandisa with Themba's ashes in an urn reveals a clash of cultures which will come to symbolise the intolerance between the two brothers, Sipho and Themba. The word 'intolerance' suggests that Themba and Sipho did not have a good fraternal relationship from childhood, and this continued even when they had become adults.

The play is set just after democracy in South Africa; this is during the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) which aimed at helping and healing the wounds of families who suffered the injustices of the Apartheid era. 'The play revolves around the revelation of the hidden stories of a family deeply affected by political struggle that was responsible for Themba's exile' (Jamal, 2009:12). Most of the issues occurring in the drama concerning morality and corruption are not clear; they require one to study the text critically. Kani's play is about early Post-Apartheid mourning. Sipho, his daughter

Thando and his English-born niece Mandisa are mourning the death of Themba, Siphos younger brother. Thando's father, Siphos, reveals the truth that Themba is Thando's biological father as he had been sleeping with Siphos wife. Despite this Themba appeared as a hero in the eyes of many. Siphos is obsessed with the idea that Themba took everything from him and keeps on repeating 'the taking must stop'.

Jamal notes that Kani's drama 'questions the historical orthodoxy of the struggle movement by challenging the overt celebration of exile partisan members, and members who, accused or convicted of treason or terrorism, populated apartheid's prisons' (2009:12). Siphos says that as a black man, he also suffered during the struggle, thus one may argue that among other things, what angers him the most is the fact that credit is given to those who went to exile, like Themba, rather than those who remained in the country. Siphos defends his feelings by saying:

I too suffered as a black person. I went to the marches like everyone else.

I might not have been detained. I might not have been on Robben Island. I did not leave the country, but I suffered too. The thousands that attended funerals on Saturdays, that was me. (2002:57)

With reference to the above arguments, it is evident that Kani's play is composed of angry characters who seek the healing power of truth because of the effects of the unfair and violent struggle of Apartheid hence, the TRC was created as an attempt to give people the opportunity to voice their anger in order to heal these wounds.

2.3.2 Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*

Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* explores themes such as morality, corruption, and class among other issues. Roberts (2012: vii) states that 'Mda also exposes the superstitions, customs and beliefs about sexuality that guide our everyday life.' There are issues of rape and gender violence in the play, and these perpetuate protest issues as well as pointing out class themes.

Superstitions, customs and beliefs about sexuality that influence our everyday life are some of the themes explored by Mda in his play (Roberts, 2012:vii), and they all have a

link to the themes which are discussed in this study. For example, one superstition that is seen in the drama is that if a man is HIV positive and rapes a virgin he may be cured of the disease – this results in many rapes and more violence thereby evoking protest and health issues. For the purpose of this study; as well as morality and corruption, I will look into protest, health and class themes in the play.

Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* is set in Post-Apartheid South Africa and consists of five characters, two Acts and three Scenes in each Act. The play begins in a Park which is said to be clean and well kept. Scene one unfolds in conversations between Professor, a black man in his mid-thirties who reads newspapers and books regularly, and Lord-Stewart, an old English South African with a British accent. The Seller of Laughter also comes in – a young black man who sees himself as funny and makes a living out of selling his jokes. Stewart talks about his Lover whom he is supposed to go and look for on the streets of Benoni, hence the title of the play *Our Lady of Benoni*.

Scene Two introduces Madlomo, a woman from the same village as Professor, and a cleaner. Professor explains that Madlomo was the most respected virginity tester in the entire Valley of Thousands Hills. The rape case against the Reverend pastor is discussed and Madlomo promises to support him throughout the trial; Stewart says that he wants a social grant from by the government and Professor explains to him that he got his by buying sputum from a relative who had AIDS and that the relative sold his saliva for R30.00 to anyone who wanted to get the grant. People would buy the saliva with the TB bacteria from Professor's relative – this highlights the theme of corruption.

In Scene Three the Seller of Laughter is planning to launch a new joke and Professor criticises and mocks him. Madlomo continues to support the Reverend who is accused of rape, saying that:

Only a woman who is sissy will complain about it. Real women don't cry rape. They stand up, brush the dust from their kangas and move on. The Right Reverent Chief Comrade my Leader stands for something greater than just having sex with a woman. (2012:42)

It is in this scene that Mda reveals that Stewart also forced himself on his lover, Daniella. Mda's drama shows different cultural attitudes – this is seen in Scene Three when Professor says:

In many countries where honour killing is part of the culture women are murdered every day by their parents for failing virginity test. (2012:48).

The play proceeds to Act Two and Mda introduces Thabisile, a primary school teacher in Diepsloot, who is also described as a wide-eyed woman and Professor's ex-fiancé. She arrives and finds that Professor has left to Pilgrimage and Madlomo explains to her the state of Professor's wellbeing, the changes that she has seen in him and stresses that he really misses and needs her. The Professor finally meets with his lost lover Thabisile, and the Seller of Laughter wants to continue the game they were playing with Thabisile. Lord-Stewart comes back from where he had been to look for 'Our Lady of Benoni' – he explains his journey to Professor and the others. He comes back a blind man and Thabisile makes him believe that Daniella would be proud of him since he became blind because he went looking for her.

The issue of Lord Stewart returning blind is symbolic. Calik (2010) adds that 'perception of blindness is laden with symbols – both positive and negative, but mostly negative – in general...'. Moreover, Calik cites Monbeck who states that 'blindness symbolises a loss of power, of individual creativity, of control' (1973:143).

Therefore, the symbolism in this case is that he has lost power to look for his lover, as a result, he no longer has a clear mandate for his future since he constantly believed that he needed to find Daniella, and this suggests that he does not want live life without his lady of Benoni. As the play unfolds, issues of corruption and virginity are addressed in the second and last scene of Act Two, Professor is asked by Thabisile to go back to KwaVimba and confess all of his crimes to the police – but he refuses since he says 'what about the politicians who committed crimes and were never prosecuted?' Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* is indeed a representation of Post-Apartheid South African drama.

2.3.3 Mike van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*

van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons* questions the injustices caused by the Apartheid period with regard to the justice system of South Africa. But before he clearly reveals that, he starts by trying to paint a picture of how women who worked as domestic workers were treated in the homes in which they worked. In this case Vusi keeps on calling Braam, 'white boy', he is actually mocking him, and instructs him to continue calling his [Vusi] mother by name since she is the tea lady. Both Vusi and Braam are lawyers, and each of them has been imprisoned – Vusi was imprisoned during the Apartheid times for seemingly violating the Apartheid laws whereas Braam was arrested for allegedly shooting three men, killing two and critically wounding the other. Van Graan's drama is a series of flashbacks; hence, the two characters represent each other as lawyer – on the one scene, Braam is a lawyer; on the other scene, Vusi is a lawyer. However, during the Apartheid era and early Post-Apartheid times old women who worked as domestic workers would be disrespected by a child whose parents hired the domestic worker, this included calling them by their first names in a disrespectful manner. Van Graan uses this example to highlight the injustices which were faced by black people during Apartheid times in South Africa especially the women who worked in the kitchens. For example, Vusi says to Braam:

She could be your mother. And you call her Sylvia? Is that because she's just the tea lady, white boy? (2009:80)

One may argue that this is a matter cultural background; in the black community it is immoral to call an elderly person by his or her first name, whereas, in western culture it is not. However, the notion in this argument is that the play talks about some of the issues which occurred during Apartheid times.

Van Graan's play seems to be primarily concerned with issues of justice in the country. This notion is supported by Desmond Tutu, who is quoted in Homann's anthology, stating that the play 'explores the limited success and considerable failure of the South African criminal justice system (2009:19). The characters, Vusi and Braam, both lawyers and friends, who are in a conversation where Braam states that he is surely

unhappy because of the high number of criminal cases and the little action taken by the correctional services against those crimes. Braam asks Vusi rhetorical questions which seek to prove that the justice system of the country is not genuine at all, he asks:

...is this what we were struggling for? To be held hostage by thugs?
Rapists? Murderers? Out of apartheid's frying pan, into crime's fire! ...You
know the statics, Vusi! Twenty thousand murders a year, and less than
fifteen per cent convictions. (2009:87 & 88).

Similar to what happens in a plutocratic state whereby the rich benefit the most; in his play, van Graan seems to describe South Africa's justice system as one that favours the rich only – if one is able to afford a good lawyer, one is likely to get away with a crime – this is what happens in a plutocratic state since the plutocrats make the laws and benefit the most. In conclusion, van Graan's drama is mostly concerned with the Post-Apartheid justice system of the country.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.4.1 Post-Colonial Theory

The concept of morality is defined differently in various schools of thought, for this reason, the theory, moral criticism, is used in the study as a framework in order to keep all discussions of the selected plays within the scope of a moralist perspective. In chapter one, the study acknowledges that colonialism created a great impact on the history of South African theatre's writing. Although this study uses moral criticism as the main theoretical framework, it takes into account post-colonial theory since it concerns issues transiting between the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid eras, and some of these issues are the effects of colonialism in South Africa's theatre.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2013:154) argue that the affix 'post' in the concept 'post-colonial' does not hold the general meaning of the word 'after', they maintain that 'colonialism has been contested by a more elaborate understanding of the working of post-colonial cultures which stresses the articulations between and across the politically

defined periods, of pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence cultures.’ This means that the concept refers to the periods before colonialism, during colonialism and after colonialism in South Africa, for example. Consequently, this study is actively concerned with the period after colonialism, which is the post-Apartheid South Africa; thus it concentrates on the effects of colonialism using a moralist perspective.

The selected plays *Nothing but the Truth*, *Our Lady of Benoni* and *Some Mother’s Sons* are all set in Post-Apartheid South Africa, and as stated above, this theory is concerned with issues transiting between the periods before colonialism, during colonialism and after-colonialism respectively, the plays fall into the category after-colonialism. Because Post-Apartheid playwrights no longer write predominantly about political issues only, (Panday, 2004:18) since Apartheid and its oppression have fallen, they also write about social issues and thus playwrights concentrate on current issues.

In their essay *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*, Childs and Williams (2000:1) argue that ‘there has not been just one period of colonialism in the history of the world’, this comes after their argument that in order for one to refer to a period as post-colonialism, one has to answer the question: ‘after whose colonialism?’ (2000:1). Therefore, taking into account this argument and what the theory, post-colonialism is concerned with, the study and the selected plays identify in a South African context the period dating from 1994, when South Africa became a democracy, until the current times as the post-colonial era. Thus South Africa became a post-colonial state from the Apartheid regime.

By reason of the above, the post-colonial theory will enable the discussions in this study to be concentrated on the social issues which are explored by playwrights in their art of writing since most the issues are a result of colonialism. For example, class as a theme is a concern in Post-Apartheid or post-colonial South Africa; as a result, the discussions in this study seek to reveal the impact that colonialism has on class issues.

2.4.2 Moral Criticism

The theory, moral criticism, is incorporated in the school of literary criticism. As stated in chapter one the word ‘criticism’ in the whole concept of ‘literary criticism’ does not imply a negative approach to works of literature, instead it means that the work of a literature must be studied in a standardised manner (Gbenoba, Kehinde & Iwuchukwu, 2014:157). An online article, by an unknown author, entitled Literary Criticism: Writing Commons adds that:

Literary criticism refers to a genre of writing whereby an author critiques a literary text, either a work of fiction, a play, or poetry. [and] ...address how a particular theory of interpretation informs a reading of a work refutes some other critics’ reading of a work. (2012:1)

In light of the above, it is evident that literary criticism is useful in the interpretation of works of literature such as plays and fiction, hence, this study uses a moralist perspective which concerns mainly the right and the wrong of literature. Since the themes that the study explores are morality, corruption and class; the study will explore these from a moralist perspective. For example, the ‘moralists view corruption as an immoral and unethical phenomenon’ (Awashi, 2005:45), therefore, it can be judged that acts that may be seen as corrupt by a character in a play would be deemed immoral because of the basic principles of moral criticism.

2.5 POST-APARTHEID THEMES

2.5.1 Morality

Morality is a concept that is used in various disciplines; as a result, one has got to contextualise the concept when using it. In this study, the concept is used in order to evaluate moral and immoral events portrayed by characters in the selected plays. Having outlined this, an article on Ethics and Morality suggests that:

Individuals are continually judging their own conduct and that of their fellows. They approve of some acts and call them “right” or “good.”

They condemn other acts and call them “wrong” or “evil.” Moral judgments always have to do with the actions of human beings and, in particular, with voluntary actions—those actions freely chosen. Involuntary actions—those over which people have no control—are rarely open to moral judgment, as a person usually is not held responsible for an action that she or he did not initiate. (Gert, 2001:118)

As argued by Jucan (n.d.) in chapter one, morality is concerned with the right and wrong, the good and evil – the above citation adds support to this notion – it goes further to suggest that morality is determined by a people; this is seen where it is said that ‘moral judgements always have to do with the actions of human beings’. In addition, Gert further describes morality in what it called ‘the moral situation’; the notion it offers is that:

A moral situation involves moral agents— human beings who act, are empowered to make choices, and consciously make decisions. As moral agents, demands are made on us and place us under obligations: we have both duties and rights. We are faced with moral alternatives, and we can better weigh those alternatives when we have an understanding of the ingredients of the moral situation. (2001:118)

This suggests that what a society approves as an obligation of conduct among its people, binds everybody living in that community or social environment to those laws. In summary, this article maintains that moral situations or conduct are determined by what a people agree upon.

Although Shavell (2002) approaches this debate from a legal perspective, he makes similar arguments to those of Jucan. Shavell (2002:227) argues that morality and law ‘serve to channel our behaviour’, while Jucan (n.d.:3) ‘perceives morality as a set of rules’. In light of these notions, one uses the term law, whilst the other uses the term

rules – in definition, the concepts have some similarities – the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines the term law as ‘the whole system of rules that people in a particular country or area must obey’ (2009). From this definition, there is a clear indication that it is extremely difficult to discuss issues of law without considering the concept of rules; in other words, a law comprises of a set of rules. In summary, the two scholars may be exploring morality from different angles, but one is able to see that the concept is mainly concerned with certain standards about living which a community or a group of people agree and abide by.

An article, *The Nature of Morality*, explains that there are two major approaches in the study of morality; they are the scientific or descriptive approach and the philosophical approach. The scientific approach, on the one hand, is ‘often used in the social sciences and, like ethics, deals with human behaviour and conduct. The emphasis [is that] social scientists observe and collect data about human behaviour and conduct and then draw certain conclusions’ (Anon, n.d.:5). On the other hand, the philosophical approach is divided into two parts. The one part is concerned with ‘norms and prescriptions’ whereas the other part is not concerned with norms, but ethics. Because of these discussions, the study takes into account that one cannot examine or investigate morality without taking into account the concept of ethics. The key terms identified in the article are *ethical, moral, unethical and immoral*, the article argues that people frequently use these concepts interchangeably in ordinary language. However, with regard to the approaches identified earlier in the paragraph, this study strives to use both approaches because the selected plays and the issues discussed herein are interconnected to what the two approaches are concerned with.

Nel (2008) adds to the discussion of morality from an African perspective. In his article *Morality and Religion in African Thought*, he writes that ‘the assumption that faith or religion is the foundation of African morality can be partially endorsed when one grants space for hybrid moral constructions between Christianity and indigenous religion’ (2008:33). Before he makes this claim, he argues that there are scholars who are attempting to define African morality within the parameters of a complex global society;

this refers to some cultural conflicts as can be seen in John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* when Thando brings an urn with the ashes of Themba's body, whilst Themba's family expected the body in a coffin. Nel (2008:33) uses the word 'conventionalised' to describe this. Taking into account all that has been said by other scholars, Nel (2008:33) states that:

African morality is not necessarily based on religion or faith, but on the beneficiary values of collective family and community well-being, without dissolving the individual's character. In African thought, the "best" rational justification of the moral imperative is less of an issue than in current moral discourse.

Like the legalist's and socialist's perspective, Nel suggests that African morality is measured or explored with reference to a collection of individuals leading into a family who agree about the same values. Therefore, it can be seen that issues of morality are determined by a group of persons who share the same values and principles.

2.5.2 Corruption

Although analysis in this study is primarily based on Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*, Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* and van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*, the study will also refer to real events of Post-Apartheid South Africa in order to add value to the discussions carried herein. Among other matters, the study will refer to real events because issues of corruption, for example, are seen occurring almost daily in the current South Africa; considering the latter notion, Balboa and Medalla (2006:4) are cited in chapter one where they note that 'corruption is nurtured by politicians who coddle supporters and followers'. This means that some issues of corruption to be discussed in the study will include valid examples from the current political landscape of South Africa.

According to Jain (2001:73) 'one of the difficulties of studying corruption lies in defining it.' He argues that it is not easy to agree on a precise definition of the concept because of the nature of its complexity. However, this part of the study defines and

contextualises some of the definitions which are closely related to the subject at hand. A moralist, Gould (1991:468) perceives corruption as an issue that is concerned with unethical and immoral acts which conflict the norms of a society. This means that corruption occurs when an individual acts with 'a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society' (Gould, 1991:468) and these immoral acts may result in loss of self-respect within the society. Examples of these acts will be discussed in detail later in the study from the selected plays.

As argued by Khan (1997:2) corruption is currently receiving serious attention; in the essay, he cites Pope (1996:23) an economist who suggests that corruption results in many 'wrongs' – stating that:

Corruption at the highest levels distorts competition so denying the public access to the competitive marketplace. It induces wrong decisions resulting in: wrong projects, wrong prices, wrong contractors, substandard delivery to recoup overpricing, promotes corruption at lower levels and eroded public confidence in leaders.

It is vital to point out that this perspective on corruption is from an economist view. However, what this citation is suggesting is that when there are high levels of corruption, ordinary citizens in a country suffer much more than those who are in the government. This idea is clearly portrayed in van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons* when Braam and Vusi discuss some of the issues that are crippling the justice system of South Africa.

A number of participants at a workshop which brought together 'a group of legal experts, political leaders, activists, business people and academics' at Cairo in February 2012, said that 'corruption has become a necessary way of redistributing the wealth in a country where economic growth still benefits a limited class of individuals' (2012:6). The article, *Defining and Tackling Corruption*, outlines a summary of discussions which were undertaken at a workshop called 'Egypt Dialogue'; among other

issues, the workshop strongly argues that corruption has become a normative way of doing things in the current global community. One of the participants argues further that if there was a button which one could press to 'stop' corruption', many would not press it (Anon, 2012:6). For these reasons, the notion that playwrights reflect reality in their writing is supported in this case because it can be seen that the concept of corruption is a global factor; this means that South Africa is not the only country that is affected by this issue, thus theatre artists are exploring this phenomenon. However, the article also provides a definition which the participants at the workshop suggested. They 'broadly defined corruption as the use of public goods for private benefit' (Anon, 2012:3). When one unduly benefits from public goods, it is regarded as immoral or unethical behaviour. Therefore, the definition provided herein adds value to the primary mandate of this study which is to explore morality and corruption in the selected plays.

Although Jain (2001) argued that there is difficulty in providing a precise definition for this concept, he provides a similar definition to some of the ones provided above. He states that 'there is consensus that corruption refers to acts in which the power of public office is used for personal gain in a manner that contravenes the rules of the game' (2001:73). This definition is concerned with the way in which things ought to be done in government or any other office, thus the use of the 'contravenes' suggests that there is a certain degree in which corruption can be committed. With this point, the study highlights the notion argued in chapter one that morality, like corruption, is measured by a group of people who agree on certain standards or norms of living that will govern them. Jain further states that there are some 'illegal acts such as fraud, money laundering, drug trades, and black market operations [which] do not constitute corruption in and of themselves because they do not involve the public power' (Jain, 2001:73). This statement is contradictory to some of the issues that will be discussed later in chapters three, four and five, because black market operations, for example, are immoral; hence, this makes it corruption. This signifies the point made earlier that 'what is corrupt to one, may not be corruption to the other'. However, in summarising Jain's argument, what he seems to be maintaining in his article is that many people 'talk' corruption when the unethical acts are done by big personalities or figures of authority.

2.5.3 Class

The general notion that one may have when examining issues of class might be that of income. This means that one may assume class issues are only concerned with persons who have got enough money. Atkinson and Brandolini (2011:1) argue that examining class as a concept 'requires the examination of other dimensions beyond income'. As stated in chapter one, the term 'dimensions' in the definition refers to social positions and moral perspective that one holds in a community. Also, this may include equitable socioeconomic standards (Tarkhnishvili & Tarkhnishvili, 2013:24). Inequitable socioeconomic standards, means that those who hold social positions will unduly benefit regardless of the moral values that the specific community is to uphold. The aforementioned Tarkhnishvili and Tarkhnishvili (2013:24) outline some distinctions between the lower, middle and upper classes. Their argument is that class determines social standards among community members. For example, the social standards of one who belongs into the lower class would differ from those of another who belongs to the upper class, as a result, their social norms are likely to conflict each other.

Although Wright's essay of Foundations of class analysis: A Marxist perspective was published over a decade ago, this study finds his arguments valid in this present time; he takes a different approach to this debate because he introduces three possible ways to tackle this issue of class. Firstly, he argues that the concept is concerned with how 'people locate themselves within a social structure of inequality' (Wright, 1999:1). This refers to a state whereby people share a common set of values, for example. Secondly, he points out that this is determined by 'the relationship of people [according] to income-generating resources or assets of various sorts' (Wright, 1999:1); this part of the argument maintains that inequality in terms of class is seen through a standard of living, and good possibilities await only those with good economic backgrounds, which is clearly portrayed in van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*.

The last approach is the Marxist's perspective; Marxists are people or critics who believe in Karl Marx's theory of Marxism. The Merriam-Webster's Learner's Online Dictionary defines Marxism as:

the political, economic, and social principles and policies advocated by Karl Marx; especially: a theory and practice of socialism including the labour theory of value, dialectical materialism, the class struggle, and dictatorship of the proletariat until the establishment of a classless society.

The definition provided above contends a society that is class based, this means that Karl Marx's theory and some of the theories outlined in the definition are meant to protest against the bourgeoisies, for example, thereby ensuring a classless society. However, the approach in Wright's essay maintains that 'the account of people's subjective understanding of their location in systems of transformation' (1999:1) is vital. This approach includes both the first and the second approaches outlined above. The aforementioned approaches will add value to this study specifically on class because it investigates some complementary elements which determine morality and corruption issues in the three dramas outlined earlier in the study.

2.6 SOUTH AFRICA, A PLUTOCRACY

South Africa has witnessed numerous changes since it became a democracy and these changes have impacted the art of theatre, forcing playwrights to shift their attention from the Apartheid story to that of the Post-Apartheid South Africa. This study takes into account that Post-Apartheid South Africa is classified into periods. Jamal (2009:2) categorises South Africa into periods with reference to events which occurred at each particular time. She suggests that there is the Pre-Post-Apartheid period, the Early-Post-Apartheid period and the Post-Apartheid which date from 1990 to 2002, respectively.

In light of the of the above discussions, this study proposes a name for the period dating from 2009 to the current year, 2017, as stipulated in chapter one, the proposed name is 'Post-Apartheid Plutocracy' The reasons for suggesting a name for this period is because the periods outlined here are cited from Homann's anthology that was published in 2009, and there is no literature which suggests a name for periods dating from 2009 to the current, 2017. For this reason, the study suggested this name looking at the events that are currently occurring in South Africa and the events that are explored in the selected plays, specifically Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* and van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*, which unlike Kani's *Nothing but the Truth*, considers the most recent events witnessed by South Africans.

What is most important here is to discover the nature of a plutocratic government or country. Plutocracy is defined by the Miriam-Webster online dictionary as cited by Debs (1891) as:

a form of government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of the wealthy classes; government by the rich.'

This definition clearly reveals that a plutocratic country or state is class based, this means that the people who benefit the most in this system are the upper class, and to a lesser extent the middle class. Also, issues of corruption are perpetrated in this kind of government because the wealthy are at an advantage to benefit unduly from the state's resources. This notion is clearly portrayed in Mda's play through the role of the reverend priest who is favoured by many because of his position in the society.

In his essay *Plutocratic Leadership*, Wells (2010:423) defines a plutocrat as 'a person whose wealth gives him control or great influence.' He further tackles the term 'wealth' and its etymology. Wells argues that the word wealth 'derives from a Middle English word [*weltha*, from *wele*, well, plus the suffix *-th*, denoting condition or state] that meant the state of being prosperous' (2010:423). In the social context, this word has a connotation of being rich and economic power. This study takes its stand that because

of these attributes, the wealthy or plutocrats abuse public resources because of their positions in the society and they are the ones who are responsible in passing legislature, which in turn, they do not follow.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has defined and contextualised the Post-Apartheid themes outlined in chapter of the study. The chapter recognised some of the periods which classify South Africa's history in terms of periods, it further suggested a name for the periods dating from 2009 to 2017 in order to ensure that the selected plays, namely *Our Lady of Benoni* by Zakes Mda, *Some Mother's Sons* by Mike van Graan and *Nothing but the Truth* by John Kani are discussed within context. The study also defined morality as the umbrella theme of the study, thus it took into consideration Postcolonial theory since it transits through the periods 2009-2016. In summary, the chapter discussed the important key words and concepts governing this study in preparation to the following chapters, as well as an overview of relevant literature.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF KANI'S *NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH*

3.1 INTRODUCTION

John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* is set during the early period of Post-Apartheid South Africa, and it carries a storyline that communicates most of the events which occurred immediately after 1994 including activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Primarily, Kani's drama explores issues of reconciliation. In the drama, there is Siphso who struggles to forgive his brother Themba who impregnated his wife when they were still in their youth. When the play opens, Siphso and Thando, his daughter, are getting ready to go to the airport in order to fetch Themba's remains as he died in London. When they reach the airport, they meet Mandisa, Themba's daughter, who brings an urn of ashes – Themba has been cremated – and Siphso fails to understand the concept of cremation. Most of the events in the play are built around the death of Themba; hence, the play can be assumed to carry a strong theme of death.

The discussions in this chapter seek to reveal the three themes examined in this study, in relation to Kani's drama. Firstly and most significantly, the chapter explores morality as presented in the play. It goes on to explore issues of corruption and class. The chapter takes into consideration that Kani's drama revolves around the concepts of tradition which are seen through the eyes of Mandisa, Siphso's niece, who was reared in London and struggles to adjust to some of the norms in the Makhaya family.

3.2 MORALITY ISSUES IN JOHN KANI'S *NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH*

'There are underlying similarities shared by many African societies [regarding morality] which, when contrasted with other cultures, reveal a wide gap of difference' (Idang, 2015:97). What is suggested by this quotation is that although there are similarities in many African cultures in terms of values, there are also major differences this suggests that although societies may share similar values, each of these societies has acts or

codes of ethics which determine their morality. In this study, values are seen from a similar perspective as those of Idang (2015:101) who perceives values as a 'point of view or conviction which we can live with, live by and can even die for'. This suggests that values are related to what a society actively believes in and that a particular act defines what and who they are – and that particular society would do anything to defend their values or morality. Taking into account the concept of values and morality as outlined above, this chapter uses the concepts interchangeably to mean moral values.as well.

Idang (2007:4) further notes that:

As people differ in their conception of reality, then the values of one individual may be different from those of another. Life seems to force people to make choices, or to rate things as better or worse as well as formulate some scale or standard of values. Depending on the way we perceive things we can praise and blame, declare actions right or wrong or even declare the scene or objects before us as either beautiful or ugly. Each person, as we could see, has some sense of values and there is no society without some value system.

In light of aforementioned arguments, one may suggest that traditional South African values and morality are complimentary, thus the perception of morals by a particular society may be determined by their set of values. Therefore, one cannot study morality in isolation without taking into account the concept of values.

Van der Walt (2003:51) states that South Africa and the African continent are experiencing a decline regarding morality issues. In Kani's drama for example, the decline regarding morality issues is seen when Sipho speaks about Themba being a womaniser. He tells Mandisa how immoral her father was, he states that 'there was no single woman who had not slept with Comrade Themba. Wives, girlfriends, Themba made no distinction' (2002:53). African values and Christian values among others, prohibit fornication and adulterous acts; yet, for example, the current South Africa is faced with high levels of prostitution as a result of the 'blesser blessee' phenomenon

which refers to married older men who have sexual intercourse with young girls in exchange for money.

Van der Walt (2003:51) also identifies the decline of morality issues as a 'moral vacuum'. In his essay *Morality in Africa: yesterday and today*; The reasons for the contemporary crisis, he compares issues of morality in Africa between what he terms 'contemporary morality and traditional morality' – his essay 'provides an in-depth look at the reasons for the moral crisis' (2003:51). Among other reasons, he explores what he terms 'different external influences' which result in the moral decline; this is seen in Kani's drama since Mandisa brings an external tradition which may be assumed to be contemporary into the South African context. Furthermore, van de Walt (2003:51) also acknowledges that something important seems to have disappeared and there is nothing good to replace it. The 'something' in the latter sentence refers to morality; as a result, there is a 'moral vacuum' in the African continent.

In spite of this, van der Walt cites Kinoti (1992:84) who actively suggests that 'a shared morality was the cement of society' in traditional Africa. By traditional Africa, the author refers to ancient Africa when the level of respect among the youth towards elderly persons was valued and treasured as opposed to the contemporary African youth, for example. Among other things, Kinoti outlines some of the values which determine morality as perceived in traditional Africa – they are 'charity, honesty, hospitality, generosity, loyalty, truthfulness, solidarity, and respect for nature, elders and God' (1992:84).

When considering some observations and qualities in relation to John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth*, the study argues that the play reveals that there is indeed a 'vacuum' in terms of morality and values portrayed by some of the characters in the play. Additionally, this may be as a result of the external influences noted by van der Walt (2003). For example, after Mandisa tells Thando that she is unable to understand why Thando has to ask for permission from Siphon, her father, in order to accompany Mandisa to a designer that she needed to see. Mandisa had studied fashion in London. This is how the conversation unfolds:

THANDO: My father ... I don't think he would agree.

MANDISA: To hell with your father! It's your life! ...It's not like you are going forever! Even if you were it would still be your decision.

(2002:46)

One may argue for that Mandisa does not fully understand the South African value systems since she was reared in London; yet it must be stated clearly that the fact that Thando tried to explain to her how things work in the Makhaya residence suggests that she should understand and try to respect them. It may not be clear how Mandisa is being immoral in this case; she is being immoral due to the fact that in many African families the orders of an elderly person must be followed, when a child disrespects this order – that is regarded as immoral. Among the black community in South Africa, family is important and a child is expected to respect the elders at all times including seeking permission before leaving the household.

In contrast with Mandisa's situation, Luvuyo, Siphos son, committed a much greater breach of morality when he called his father 'a coward'. Luvuyo, enthralled by his uncle's heroic attitudes insisted on attending a young girl's funeral despite his father's opposition. Siphos was afraid that there would be trouble and the event would end badly. 'He was a poet you see. He used to recite his poems at political rallies, funerals and special occasions... He looked at me and said that Uncle Themba was right, I was a coward' (2002:53). Luvuyo was raised in the traditions of the Makhaya residence and should have known that to speak to his father in such a way was to behave in a manner that could be deemed immoral as he understood the ethical standards of his community.

Ubuntu is another African notion which influences the understanding of values and morality. Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains *Ubuntu* as a belief that 'a person is a person through other persons, that my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours. When I dehumanize you, I inexorably dehumanize myself' (Tutu, 2008). When do South Africans who fully understand the concept of *Ubuntu* and what it entails deem one to have acted immorally? As discussed in chapter two, this concept is actively concerned with humanity – what this suggests is that in a case where one is

deemed to have violated his or her community's values of humanity, he or she has highlighted what van der Walt termed 'moral vacuum'. What this study is arguing is that what is right to one person may be wrong to another person. For instance the issue of cremation, so vital to the events of the play, is a normative way of laying to rest the remains of a deceased person in most European countries whereas in most African countries, the corpse is buried since Africans believe that the deceased has to be welcomed by his or her ancestors. This is the case in Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* when Mandisa brings Themba's remains home in an urn – Siphon describes the cremation as burning, and as a result of the 'external influences', (in this case, the tradition of cremation brought into the Makhaya residence), signifies a clash of cultures thereby highlighting the issue of a 'moral vacuum' because with time, the issue of cremation may be adapted by many African families; as a result, the tradition of burying a corpse will lose its value.

This part of the chapter seeks to reveal a 'moral vacuum' portrayed by Siphon in the play. When Siphon realises that Mandisa brought the ashes of Themba's body, he is furious and confused about what he is going to tell the elders of the family. He then proceeds to enquire from Rev Haya who reminds him of the biblical reference that says 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust' (2002:29) – it is after his meeting with the reverend that Siphon and the elders decided about the day of the funeral. In his statement when he speaks to the girls about the day of the funeral, Siphon states that although the funeral will continue, there will not be the 'usual opportunity to see him [Themba] before the coffin is closed' and that his 'uncles are confused,' as he is (2002:29).

Although one may argue that there was nothing that Siphon would have done in order to change the fact that Themba's body was cremated, the moment he accepted this act as normal after talking to Reverend Haya, and the calm manner which he explained the situation to the girls suggests that he would accept this in the future; hence, the burial tradition and seeing the corpse for the last time will perish – hence, the moral vacuum. For example, Siphon uses the term 'usual' opportunity to see the corpse before the coffin is closed; the term usual suggests a normative way of doing things, but under the

circumstances wherein Themba's body is cremated they are unable to practice their tradition of seeing the corpse. This means that the cremation of Themba's body by his wife and daughter in London has compromised the practices of the Makhaya clan in South Africa, and this has forced Siphon to say that although he and his uncles are confused, they will have to continue with the funeral plans. Although a way forward to conduct a funeral is found, this compromises the normative ways of conducting funerals in the Makhaya clan or black culture. Therefore, the study argues that there are 'external influences' which compromise some values of a people or society thereby resulting in the negligence of the ethical codes of conduct of a particular society. Thus, this supports Kinoti's (1992) concept of a moral vacuum in South Africa because the 'influences' are likely to replace the traditional morality by the contemporary morality.

As mentioned previously, Jucan (n.d.2) views morality as a system in which behavioural codes are set by a particular society and these codes serve as measurements to evaluate and legitimise behaviour 'in terms of good or evil.' When one has acted immorally, he or she becomes aware of the act, as is the case with Themba, Siphon's brother. Themba left for exile and never returned to South Africa when the country became a democracy; although his exile might be seen political since most exiles were political during the Apartheid era, one may assume that Themba's exile seems to have been dominantly moral because he left immediately. Siphon discovered that he had been having sexual intercourse with his wife – therefore, one may argue that he was ashamed of his evil deeds towards his brother, thus Siphon says he never saw him and Thando's mother again after he caught them having sex in his bed (2002:56).

In addition, Jucan's view complements the concept of *Ubuntu* which is associated only with the good. Brown (2002:80) states that *Ubuntu* is a:

uniquely southern African concept which has to do with the way in which we see and treat other human beings. It encourages us to see the humanity of others, and to treat all individuals with tolerance, sensitivity and respect.

In all societies, both the Western and African, adultery is perceived as an evil deed and it conflicts with the principles of *Ubuntu*. Kani reveals the immoral acts committed by Themba who had been sleeping with his brother's wife. This indicates in reference to the concept of *Ubuntu*, Themba did not have respect for his brother, neither did Sipho's wife.

When one follows the idea that morality is comprised of the behavioural codes which evaluate and legitimate behaviour, one finds that the bible forbids this act. First Corinthians (7:1-5) states that each man should have one woman; similarly, the woman should have one husband. The scripture stipulates that this should be done in order to avoid fornication (The Bible, n.d.), but because Themba had sinned by having sexual intercourse with his brother's wife, he became aware of his evil act, and had to leave the country.

Talking to Mandisa, Sipho yells:

For once do as I ask! Shut up! And you say I was jealous of him! For what! ... Themba went to these gatherings because they were his hunting ground for other people's wives. Oh he was famous for that! (2002:53).

It can be seen that Themba embraced neither the norms of his community nor of his family. Shavell (2002:227) explains that morality is measured by one's behaviour as agreed upon by the community and this includes both law and moral standards. Themba proves to lack all these qualities because he committed adultery with his brother's wife.

Furthermore, what this suggests about the Post-Apartheid South Africa is that, figuratively, many South Africans are still dealing with the injustices and the betraying effects of the Apartheid period. Through Sipho, one is able to see the anger that he has towards his brother, Themba, comparable to, and symbolic of, the anger of many black South Africans towards the past Apartheid system. As a result, it can be argued that on the one hand, when Sipho sees Thando and Mandisa, he always remembers the heartache he suffered because of his wife and brother. On the other hand, many black

South Africans are very sensitive with regard to racial issues because of the past injustices. For example, Penny Sparrow, a former estate agent was heavily attacked after she labelled black people 'monkeys' on a social media platform, Facebook (Evans, 2016). Arguably, many black South Africans seem to respond quickly to issues of racism especially when these issues are articulated by a white person. This may be because of the past injustices of Apartheid. For instance, black people do articulate words which may qualify as hate speech on the social media platforms, and they are hardly under scrutiny. The argument is that because of the injustices of Apartheid such as racism against black people among others, black South Africans respond quick to these issues especially when they are articulated by a white person. This exists in a form of a stigma. Thus, Penny Sparrow was ordered by the Equality court pay a fine of 'R150 000 to the Adelaide and Oliver Tambo Foundation' (Evans, 2016).

In addition, most African writers such as Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe among others have written about the results of colonialism in Africa regarding cultural issues. The argument is that although colonialism has passed in many African countries, its results can be seen. This is the case in South Africa – many results of the Apartheid period are evident in the current era. An example found in Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* is the TRC - Truth and Reconciliation Commission – which was formed as a result of the events which occurred during Apartheid and its aims were to provide healing and closure to families and individuals who suffered because of the system (2002:33). Therefore, figuratively, one may assume that the events occurring around the character of Siphon and Themba are a symbolic reflection that Post-Apartheid South African theatre is dealing with some of the impacts of the Apartheid era.

Among other issues, Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* explores the theme of mourning in two cultures, the African culture and the Western culture. Scene two of the play opens with Siphon and Mandisa arguing about the ashes that Mandisa brought along with her from London whilst Siphon and the Makhaya family expected Themba's body in a coffin. As argued earlier in the study that morality is a societal phenomenon, this means that good behaviour is determined by a particular society. In most African cultures,

cremating a deceased is considered as immoral and is associated with the evil, whereas in most western cultures that it is a normalised conduct.

In addition to the distinction between African and Western cultures regarding funerals, a widow is expected to be present at the funeral of the deceased husband in Africa – in the case of Themba, his wife was absent from the funeral. Moreover, the wife cannot speak at the funeral in the African context.

For example, the wife of former racing car driver, Gugu Zulu was negatively criticised by many people on social media for conducting interviews about her late husband, but Leshego Zulu 'came out to defend herself from [the] criticism' and said that 'she was celebrating her husband's life, and believed no one should dictate nor impose their traditional ways of grieving on her' (Venge, 2016). Many critics have labelled her actions as 'inappropriate', but the widow says people should not 'impose their traditional ways of grieving on her' According to the perspective of the critics, in the black culture, a mourner is not supposed to express his or her views in public during the period of mourning, instead he or she must allow the community to support the family until the end of the period of mourning. It is for this reason that one may argue that issues of morality can only be determined by a particular society, for that particular society as is the case with Mandisa who sees no problem about cremation whereas Siphos refers to this as 'burning' since he does not understand the motives, hence he states that Mandisa and her mother have embarrassed him (2002:17). The thought of Siphos being embarrassed highlights the notion of moral vacuum because in this case the issue of cremation may be seen as a possible modern form to replace the normative way of conducting funerals in the Makhaya household, and the South African way, in general. This could be perceived as bringing external influences.

Kani explores some of the purposes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which were, in the main, conceived to heal the wounds of those who suffered the unfair treatment of the Apartheid system. Of course the intentions of the commission were to assist in finding a common ground among South Africans, both black and white in order to ensure that there was peace in the country. But this aim conflicts with the norms of society which determine morality, for example, murder is perceived as an evil deed and

most of the perpetrators in the TRC had committed murder. With the latter point, issues of morality can conflict with each other because the standards of a moral act or an immoral act are determined by a single society for its designated people.

As stated in chapter one of the study, Jucan (n.d.:3) perceives morality as a set of rules which individuals agree upon, these rules may be cognitive rather than normative; this means that a particular group of individuals may agree upon a set of rules which they think are suitable for them to achieve a particular goal. For example, on the one hand, the Apartheid system had policies which were brutal against black South Africans, some of these included murder – it must be taken into account that murder is an evil deed; hence it is immoral according to moralists. On the other hand, the TRC, because of its mandate, aimed at granting amnesty to the people who brutally oppressed and murdered blacks at the time – moralist would argue that murderers do not deserve the amnesty because each evil act must be punished as per the societal measures. This conflict of standards brings Mandisa to refuse to understand why some of the murderers interrogated by the TRC were granted amnesty even when they had committed murder:

MANDISA: Then why is Craig Williamson a free man? He committed murder.

THANDO: Because according to the rules and requirements for amnesty... (2002:32)

Similarly, Siphos says he wants his son's murderers to be brought to book:

SIPHOS: No, not yet. I haven't finished yet. They must give him a prison khaki shirt and a pair of prison khaki shorts. No shoes. One grey blanket and mat to sleep on. The following day he must wake up in his cell in prison, knowing that he is serving time for killing my son... (2002:59)

The above citations support the notion that the rules for amnesty in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were not equally favourable to both parties especially those of the victims, and the normative standards of society which maintain that every sin must be punished accordingly. In the context of the commission, any perpetrator who

would come forth with a confession about a crime he or she committed during the Apartheid times, would be granted amnesty; but is this favourable to the victims? Of course not, because according to societal standards or morals – murder is a serious crime, for example, and anyone committing this crime must be punished. Taking into consideration the notion that the system adopted by the TRC was not favourable to the victims, Sipho argues that he wants justice to be served for Luvuyo's death who was killed by a police officer at a funeral of a school girl. It is for these reasons that this study argues that issues of morality tend to conflict with one another because of the complex rules in different societies. In this case, the TRC had its own rules, so were the victims because many of them wanted justice for themselves and their families.

In summary, issues of morality in Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* are not literal – one has to critically evaluate the events occurring in the play in order to reveal these issues. However, it can be seen that issues of morality in the drama overlap with cultural issues which include the debate about mourning between the African and Western normative ways of mourning.

3.3 CORRUPTION ISSUES IN JOHN KANI'S *NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH*

Many people seem to associate the concept, corruption, only with improper public administration of funds and nepotism, for example, whereas it can refer to various issues depending in the context in which a critic wishes debate the concept. Chapter one considered various definitions by various literary critics such as Khan and Gould who seem to maintain that corruption is not only the obvious events that are seen in the public, it also concerns issues of principles. For this reason, the study argues that what is corrupt to one person, may not be corrupt to another person. The present chapter approaches the concept looking at different events in John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth*.

With regard to morality issues, this chapter pointed out that given the circumstances of Themba's body being cremated, and the confusion that this brings to Sipho and his uncles, there is a highlight of a 'moral vacuum' since such acts are likely to be adopted in future. After his meeting with Reverend Haya, Sipho seems to be at ease with the cremation, this suggests that in future he may adapt the tradition of cremation since

Rev Haya told him that it is biblically accepted; because of this kind of influence, there is a chance that such 'external influences' may replace the normative way of doing things in a particular society. Concurrently, this corrupts the culture of a people as time progresses; the moral ancient way of doings may be superseded by time and circumstances. This suggests that because of the circumstances which in this case refers to cremation (Kani, 2002:15) the normative way of conducting funerals in black communities, particularly in families who believe in ancestral customs like the Makhayas is being corrupted. Gould's definition of corruption maintains that this refers to 'immoral and unethical phenomena that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of [a] society' (1991:468) may be deemed as corrupt. The issue of cremation in the play conflicts the 'moral standards' of the Makhayas because their values are violated when Mandisa brings Themba in the form of ashes – this is a digression from the normative way of conducting funerals in their family. As a result of the aforementioned moral aberration, there is loss of respect and confidence in the normative conduct of a society thereby resulting in what this study could term a corrupted tradition.

In their essay *The Economics of Corruption and the Corruption of Economics: An Institutional Perspective*, Hodgson and Jiang (2007:1044) note that 'the root of the word "corruption" is in the Latin adjective *corruptus*, meaning spoiled, broken or destroyed.' The two outline that the concept of corruption is a 'popular topic in the social sciences' (2007:1044), and this may be because of its complexity. Therefore, looking at the storyline which concerns Themba and Sipho in the drama, the study wishes to argue that Sipho is broken, but not in the corrupt sense. Themba is broken in the corrupt sense. The arguments regarding this notion develop around the etymology of the concept as described above. The reason this study describes Sipho as a broken man is because of Themba's behaviour, since as the play unfolds, Kani portrays Themba as a character who has always made Sipho's life a misery from as early as their childhood days. There are numerous events where Sipho talks about the pain that Themba caused him; as a result he ends up saying 'the taking must stop' (2002:58).

Although it may seem as though Siphso is jealous of his brother, Themba, in the following examples, the study argues that because Kani presents Siphso as a traditional and conservative person who never abandoned his family like Themba did, his viewpoint is the most reliable. Therefore, Themba is perceived in this study as an emotionally corrupt man, whereas Siphso is seen as an emotionally broken man because of the things Themba did to him. The notion of the men being emotionally corrupt and broken, respectively is clearly explained in the following examples. Firstly, when the two grew up, Themba had plenty of toys which were bought by his father, but Siphso never had any since he was the elder brother. Siphso made a wire-bus and Themba cried demanding that Siphso gave him the bus – Siphso did not want to give Themba the bus, but the father yelled that Siphso should give Themba the wire-bus; and after a day, the wire-bus was crushed. This reveals Themba as a selfish individual and the ‘father openly favoured Themba and [would] it hurt’ (2002:37). Secondly, Themba committed adultery with Siphso’s wife, this study argues that this act is one that actively destroyed Siphso because it resulted in Thando possibly being Themba’s, not Siphso’s daughter. Therefore, this means that Themba took Siphso’s wife and daughter. Lastly, Siphso talks about his father’s funeral and the way in which the ‘UDF took over [his] father’s funeral’ (2002:51). He says that:

They turned my father’s funeral into a political rally. There were twelve speakers. One after the other, talking about Themba’s father. I sat there like a stranger. I paid for the coffin I paid for the food they were all eating. But I was just Comrade Themba’s brother. (2002:51)

The concern made by Siphso here is that although Themba is unable to attend the father’s funeral, he continues ‘taking’ numerous events which could have made him, Siphso significant in the public domain. In conclusion to this notion of Siphso being emotionally broken, when one faces so much neglect in a family, especially from the people who should protect one, such as a mother or father, one is likely to be emotionally broken and this is likely to create negative emotions in future as seen between the two brothers. Siphso is seen expressing his emotions, he states that:

I too deserved some recognition, didn't I? No! No more! It's payback time. The taking stops right now here and now. I want everything back, Themba. I want my wire double decker bus now. I want it back. It was mine. Mom and Dad are not here now to speak for you. I want my blazer back. I was mine. I want my wife back. She was mine. She loved me, not you. Do you hear me? I want my daughter back. She is mine. She's my baby, not yours... (2002:58)

Sipho says all these things after Themba has died, and, it can be seen that indeed Sipho is emotionally broken. Thus these events compromised his dignity as a man, and dignity is one of many things that assist people in reaching a morality as advocated by the concept of *Ubuntu* that all individuals should be honoured with respect, and respect restores one's dignity.

The description of Themba's behaviour in the play attests to Balboa and Medalla that 'corruption is nurtured by politicians who coddle supporters and followers, who in turn pressure them to engage in corruption to spread the benefits of a corrupt regime' (2006:4). Although Themba is not directly seen pressuring anybody to engage into any form of corruption in the play, he hypocritically coddles supporters and leaves to exile where he dies. Themba's supporters are seen taking over his father's funeral and the brother, Sipho is not happy with the act.

Among other things, corruption is concerned with manipulating the normative system for private gain or personal interest. For example, in the South African landscape of politics, The Executive of Izingwe Capital Limited in Sandton and Advisor to the Labour Relations and the Minister of Education, Sipho Pityana came out strongly asking President Jacob Zuma to step down at the funeral of the late former Minister of Sports and Recreation, Makhenkesi Arnold Stofile. Similarly, the SABC's former COO, Hlaudi Motsoeneng also used the late kwaito star, Mduduzi Chabalala, popularly known as Mandoza's funeral to lash at his critics. This act can be deemed immoral because it

corrupts the general programme of the funeral, and the popular politicians manipulate their way to communicating their political ideas at the expense of the particular families.

From the response of the characters in the play there seems to be improper administration of state institutions portrayed in Kani's drama; in the TRC and the library, where Sipho worked, for example. By definition, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009) defines improper as the state of being 'dishonest, illegal, or immorally wrong. Relatively, it defines administration as 'the activities that are involved in managing the work of a company or organisation' (2009). Therefore, in this study, improper administration is perceived as the illegal or dishonest way of managing the work of companies, in this instance, companies refer to commissions of enquiries formed by the state such as the TRC and the library where Sipho worked. The argument presented herein is that the improper administration of these commissions resembles a notion of corruption since most of the commissions hardly produce results to hold perpetrators of the particular events at hand accountable.

Section eighty four (84), subsection two (2) of South Africa's constitution allows the sitting President to appoint a commission of enquiry to investigate matters of public and national concern resulting from tragic events in the country. Macleod (2013) questions the legitimacy of most commissions which are aimed at finding truths about events such as the Marikana massacre where 34 miners were shot and killed by the police. Such commissions are meant to assist the families and surviving victims to have some closure on the tragic issues which affect them negatively regarding the events. Contrary to the aims of these commissions of enquiry, Macleod (2013) asks whether these commissions of enquiry:

serve any purpose at all? Are they purposed to uncover injustice and right or wrongs, or are they merely elaborate ruses aimed at distracting the public and delivering outcomes favourable to a few? And, perhaps most importantly, are they an effective use of public resources?

In relation to the way in which the TRC is explored by Kani in his play, this study argues that although the decision to form a commission of enquiry was made on behalf of the nation by representatives of political parties in the country with the aim to represent both the perpetrators and the victims objectively, it seems that the commission at the time was favourable to the perpetrators. For example, Siphos is still angry that his son's murderer did not account in terms of justice for murdering his son – this suggests that there was not much investigation done on the case, yet what Siphos wants is to see justice served by locking the murderer in a prison cell and throwing away the key (2002:58). However, most of the perpetrators who appeared before the commission seem to have been granted amnesty provided they confessed their crimes regardless of how the victim felt. Additionally, in a conversation with Thando, Mandisa argues that those who committed murder should be punished, this means that Mandisa is of the view that like the Marikana commission which has not produced any results since 2012, the TRC did not cater for both parties, it was subjective and it was perceived to be more in favour of the perpetrators than victims, hence she says to Thando:

Then make me understand. Pretend I am an idiot. Explain it to me. A man sends a parcel bomb to two women and a child. It blows their guts out and he is not guilty of any crime. (2002:31)

The above quote seeks to support the notion that most commissions do not serve the needs of the victims as is the case with Siphos who is still seen seeking justice for his son, Luvuyo who was killed by a police at funeral of a school girl. Therefore, this study maintains that some state institutions such as commissions of enquiries are improperly administered.

Siphos worked for the library for many years as an assistant chief librarian, and he always dreamt of becoming a chief librarian, but because of the corrupt system of the Apartheid regime which discriminated people in terms of their race, he could not become one. Instead he waited for independence in the country, South Africa, with the hope that he would get the position, but because of he was nearing his retirement age –

he could not get the post. Although the age issue does not directly suggest improper administration of state institutions; the issue of race does suggest that improper administration of state institutions existed during the Apartheid and proceeded to Post-Apartheid times. For example, in the current state institutions, cabinet ministers are appointed because of their political affiliations, not because they possess the relevant skill to administer that particular department. One may argue that this is morally accepted in the political domain, or is it? It is for this reason that this study argues that morality issues are dependent on a particular context.

In conclusion, considering the above discussions, it can be seen that morality and corruption are dependent upon the context in which they are discussed. This means that, for example, the TRC and its rules acted morally in its contexts because in order for a perpetrator to be granted amnesty, he or she had to meet the requirements of the commission – this would be the moral standards of the commission – however, the question still remains whether in accordance to societal morality, was the TRC really morally guided? The answer to this question would go further to the debate of what a particular society deems as good behaviour; this is because the TRC would be seen as a society. Therefore, morality is dependent on context.

3.4 CLASS ISSUES IN JOHN KANI'S *NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH*

Class is a complex concept which requires contextualisation when tackled in a detailed study like this one. As stipulated in Chapter Two that many people generalise the concept of class as one which is solely associated with financial issues, this study takes a turn to argue that the concept can be examined from different approaches – Atkinson and Brandolini (2011:1) explain that class issues do not only concern monetary issues, they require extensive examination beyond income. Therefore, this part of the study approaches the concept from three different angles namely a cultural perspective, a socioeconomic perspective and a hierarchical perspective. Each of these subthemes will be explored in relation to morality issues. Also, it must be noted that most of the events in Kani's play seem to address morality issues from a cultural perspective –

considering this thought, the argument is that different cultures to have behavioural standards which seem to naturally place people into different roles according to their gender, hence, the discussions seek to claim a morality of a people perpetuate class issues.

3.4.1 Cultural perspective

Rapid globalisation and migration have resulted in people of different cultures and traditions transferring their different behavioural standards among one another, and this has some impacts on the morality of the other culture and tradition, respectively. Moreover, this study terms the latter a 'hybridity-of-culture'; by the hybridity of culture, the study refers to the mixture of different cultures when people come together. This notion will be clearly developed as the discussions in the chapter unfold. However, in a traditional South Africa, especially in rural societies, class issues from a cultural and a traditional perspective seem to be determined by the roles which people perform in the family or society. Wright's (1999:1) explanation of class stresses that the concept is a determining factor which subconsciously locates people into social groups according to their capacity or role in the society. This means that 'people locate themselves within a social structure of inequality' (1999:1). For example, women in most rural places are assumed to be solely suitable for house chores and looking after their children, whereas men are expected to work and provide for their families; therefore, within such rural places, it is immoral for a woman to go out and seek employment whilst the man in the household is still alive.

Another example, the number of women who have acquired education, and have good jobs in the modern day has increased, but these women are still subject to their male counterparts, their independence is to a certain extent limited. This is seen through Thando. Kani presents Thando as a teacher and that she works for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an interpreter, and she has a boyfriend as well; yet she still needs to get her father's permission before she can leave the house (2002:48). One may contend this notion by stating that this is the Makhaya tradition which is dictated by

their behavioural standards, but when does a morality of a society allow one to fully excise his or her right to independence? When tackling this issue from a hierarchical ideology, Sipho as the elder of the house has a higher ranked position in terms of 'hierarchical class', thus this means that he is the 'boss' and the two young ladies are supposed to be subordinated to him. What this seeks to argue is that class as a concept explored from a moral perspective reveals that morality issues are dependent on context. Also, looking at the context in the play, Thando is tolerant towards her father; she does this because she is guided by the Makhaya's behavioural standards and the ideology undertaken here is that she does this because in terms of her culture and the position that she holds in the household requires her to be obedient to Sipho as the elder.

When examining the character of Thando and Mandisa, respectively, with regard to class issues from a cultural perspective, it seems that issues of class and morality between the two characters are shaped by their background or tradition. Mandisa is born and reared in London, and she is uninformed about the Makhaya's culture which makes it difficult for her to easily understand the behavioural standards of the family. Although she knows some of the food and the culture of the Makhaya's such as *Phutu* (a grainy type of pap), *Morodu* (intestines of a cow) and pap and steak, this does not mean that she fully understands the culture and tradition. Because of this, Mandisa may be classified as a character whose morality and class are being challenged since she is now part of a different country and family wherein things are done differently compared to her country of origin. In the case of Thando and Mandisa, one is from London and as per the argument herein, her class and morality, as well as her norms are bound to be somewhat different from the other, Thando who is born and reared in South Africa.

3.4.2 Socioeconomic Perspective

A socioeconomic perspective implies that the concept of class in this part of the essay is explored from a social and an economic approach. Saifi and Mehmood (2011:119) view socioeconomic status as 'a combined measure of an individual's or a family's

economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation.’ This view suggests that socioeconomic issues cover a wide range of components such as education and occupation, for example. People in a society usually classify themselves according to their level of education and income – this may be subconscious. For example, during the Apartheid times black people were inferior to white people because of their skin colour – the whites were perceived as a people of ‘intelligence’ as compared to black nation. This perpetuated class issues in terms of race; this is seen when Siphon states how he anxiously wanted the position of Chief Librarian which he never got to occupy because South Africa became a democracy when he was close to his retirement age, and the library could not appoint him due to the fact that he was going to retire soon – but his argument is that he was not afforded the same opportunity when he was still young and qualified for the post because of his skin colour. The argument here is that social structures and economic standards in a community or country create small groups of class orientated behavioural norms.

Socioeconomic issues also signify the position that an individual has in the community. This means that the social class or status of an individual, including his or her economic status in a society adds value to the prominence his or her position in the particular society. Although when exploring the character of Themba from a moral perspective it can be seen that he has poor moral standards compared to Siphon, but in terms of social and economic class, Themba seems to have greater prominence both in the society and the family than his brother, Siphon. This is seen when Siphon narrates how Themba’s popularity in politics resulted into his father’s funeral turned into a political rally. He states that:

They turned my father’s funeral into a political rally. There were twelve speakers... I paid for the coffin... I even paid for the food they were all eating. But I was just comrade Themba’s brother... (2002:51)

Because of his position as a politician in the society, even after he left the country and stayed in exile for many years, he remained popular. This proves that social positions in

societies contribute to class issues thereby resulting in the grouping of people according to their positions. This in turn discriminates other people, making them to seem less valuable than others. This also adds to the notion of class being a contributing factor in hierarchical issues.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In summary, this chapter has discussed three major themes in Kani's *Nothing but the Truth*, the themes were morality, corruption and class issues. The chapter examined Kani's play as an early Post-Apartheid drama which is among the early plays in theatre studies to explore social issues than political issues such as the Apartheid events. Although John Kani reflects real events of class in the play, the chapter found that his drama explores many morality issues, and to a lesser extent, issues of corruption. Therefore, taking into account the discussions, Kani's drama addresses issues of morality from a western and a South African cultural perspective.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF *MDA'S OUR LADY OF BENONI*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Zakes Mda is not just a recognised playwright, he has won a 'number of awards in South Africa, the United States of America and Italy, including the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Africa' (Mda, 2012:108). In an interview with a journalist of the City Press, Mda states that he wrote his play, *Our Lady of Benoni*, with the intention to teach, as was the case with his other work – he ascertains that he wrote this play with the aim of alerting people about the issues which were occurring around them in 2014. The play addresses social issues rather than political issues which his early plays and novels investigated. Taking into account the above discussions, this chapter examines issues of morality, corruption and class in Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*. The study perceives the events explored in the drama as social rather than political. Mda's drama seems to actively address issues of corruption as compared to the other themes. Unlike Kani's drama where the concept of morality seems to dominate the other concepts, Mda's drama seems to add to the debate about corruption. The study takes into account the date in which Mda's play is set and published; hence, the concept of 'Post-Apartheid Plutocracy' will be explored in relation to the events occurring in the drama.

Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* explores various issues which include sexual behaviour among men and women. Central to the discussion of these behaviours is the concept of virginity. Additionally, he reveals some superstitions that are associated with the concept, virginity, in order to communicate his ideas. Although Mda's drama has many characters who clearly represent the issue of virginity, this study suggests that role of MaDlomo, Professor and Lord Stewart are significant in portraying the theme of virginity. For example, Professor lost his wife Thabisile due to cultural beliefs which concern serious disregard for women who lose their virginity before marriage. Also, Lord Stewart embarks on a pilgrimage in search of his 'virgin' girlfriend Danielle. MaDlomo is a virginity tester who strongly believes in this cultural practice. These events portray the underlying theme which Mda explores in the play.

The playwright examines indifference to women's sexuality in societies with reference to some cultural expectations. Roberts states that Mda 'explores relations between knowledge and sex, along with how these are symbolised in the way we speak, write and think about the female body and sexual politics' (Mda, 2012:vii). This citation supports the notion that among other themes, Mda's play explores women's sexuality and the manner in which some traditions result in portraying women as objects.

4.2 MORALITY ISSUES IN MDA'S *OUR LADY OF BENONI*

It seems that there are various ways of measuring morality. According to Shavell (2002:227) the manner in which morality is measured, is similar to the manner in which law is measured. He approaches this debate from a law perspective, and he argues that 'both law and morality serve to channel our behaviour' (2002:227). Taking into account Jucan's (n.d.:2) definition of morality which states that behavioural standards are measured 'within a specific socio-historical context'; the study recognises Tuplin's (2008) ideology of morality from a virtual context.

Before engaging Tuplin's (2008) ideology of morality, it is important to demonstrate the connection between Shavell's (2002) and Jucan's (n.d.) arguments in relation to the play. Firstly, in this study, this notion of morality is actively considered from a sociological context rather than a law perspective. For example, Jucan's (nd.:2) definition of morality suggests that the morality of a society is measured by that particular society – in the play, MaDlomo is amazed by Professor's criticism of their virginity testing because this is regarded as a tradition that should be respected by everybody at KwaVimba (Mda, 2002:49). The most important issue in measuring morality is when the society agrees on behavioural standards. Reflecting on the events which occurred after Professor's and Thabisile's wedding night, where the elders could not find the required single stain on sheets after the couple's first sexual encounter, the study argues that in relation to Shavell's (2002:227) ideology, when a society agrees on certain behavioural standards, they become law; as a result, all people affected by that particular law or behavioural standards ought to abide by those standards.

In his essay 'Virtual Morality', Tuplin (2008) explores morality from a sociological and a theological perspective – he argues that on the one hand, 'a sociological approach to morality judges murder wrong because it harms an innocent person', while on the other hand, 'a theological approach to morality finds murder sinful not only because of the physical act, but also because God is offended by an angry mind as well as violent hands.' This argument supports the concept that morality is dependent upon a particular society. Similarly to the above discussions on Shavell's and Jucan's arguments, the relevance of Tuplin's 'Virtual Morality' is seen through the response of the public or the society of KwaVimba in the manner which they mistreated Thabisile because of the allegations that she was no longer a virgin when she married. Because this particular society actively believes in the virginity testing tradition, they use this phenomenon to measure a woman's morality, thus the society seem to not consider the harm that the agreed upon standards may have on an individual.

However, Tuplin (2008) interrogates whether virtual life has a morality or not. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary – CALD (2008) defines virtual as a concept which 'describes something that can be done or seen using a computer and therefore without going anywhere or talking to anyone.' In the article, Tuplin uses a modern game *Grand Theft Auto* which is about stealing cars and murder, as well as other violent crimes in order to argue from a theological approach. He argues that although one may be playing 'just' a game – theologians would argue that God will judge him or her immoral because the mind is engaged in the game. In addition, his argument is that all the crimes committed in the virtual game are assumed to be as a result of the angry mind behind the control pad of the computer. Tuplin also cites the commandment in the book of Mathew wherein Jesus says, 'You must not commit adultery. But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (Tuplin, 2008). In order to clearly illustrate Tuplin's argument, one may concentrate on the rape case of MaDlomo's daughter. The community of KwaVimba would judge the man who raped the child by taking into account the physical harm or pain caused by the man to the child. Theologians argue that the man would be judged twice; firstly, the evil mind which is persuaded by his belief that a virgin cures AIDS and then the act of physically attacking the child. Taking into account these discussions, it

can be seen that unlike sociologists who measure morality solely based on physical harm, theologians go a step further to claim that the mind also adds value to the act. In summary, the study supports the notion of theologians who pursue the role of the mind in every action because every person's actions are directed by his or her individual thoughts.

Furthermore, the notion of rape in Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* seems to carry some ambiguities because the general perception of Christianity and church pastoring suggest 'good societal moral standards.' However, in this case Mda presents a Reverend Chief, a priest, who is accused of rape, and there are women who are protesting in his support against the victim. MaDlomo, a virginity tester who is originally from Kwazulu Natal, and works in Jo'burg argues that 'only a woman who is sissy will complain' (2012:42) about being raped by such a prominent member of society. According to societal norms, rape is immoral because it physically harms the victim (Tuplin, 2008). When one makes careful inspection on the role of MaDlomo, it can be seen that her behaviour in supporting the reverend priest is perpetuated by the priest's support of the virginity testing custom. MaDlomo can be deemed immoral because of her support for the reverend given the circumstances of her daughter who was raped and infected with HIV due to the myth that a man who is HIV positive can be cured by having sexual intercourse with a virgin.

In addition, the concept of virginity seems to be the underlying theme in the play. To mention a few events that support this suggestion; MaDlomo's daughter is raped by a man who believes that having sexual intercourse with a virgin cures HIV. Also, Thabisile's marriage to Professor was ruined because the community in the KZN village believed that she was no longer a virgin when she married.

Lastly, Lord Stewart leaves for Benoni in pursuit of his girlfriend Danielle, the virgin. Danielle is described as one who 'has the ancient art of hearing voices' (Mda, 2012:14); with this in mind, Mda uses the similar event of a 17 year old girl, Francesca Zackey, whose exploits flooded the media in May 2007. In his *Explorations in South African Drama, Theatre and Performance*, Ebewo (2017:56) gives a synopsis of the manner in

which the events of the girl who claimed to have hosted Mary the mother of Jesus, unfolded. He narrates that:

The beautiful teenager (now young lady) is of Lebanese descent and is a devout Maronite Catholic who first spoke in tongues on 2 October 2005. According to several media reports, Francesca claimed that in May 2007, while she was eating dinner with her parents she perceived the sweet smell of roses and Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to her. “She was wearing an ice blue cloak with a royal blue veil (silk). She has caring blue eyes.” A few weeks later (23 May 2007), the Blessed Mary was once again seen buried within the orbit of the sun. Francesca heard the mystical voice of Mary imploring her to say the Rosary while being bestowed with power to heal the sick and cure diseases. (Ebewo, 2017:56)

This story became known to many people; as a result, many went on a pilgrimage because they believed that she had intercessionary powers since she claimed to have seen the mother of Jesus. She was referred to as “Our Lady of the Ray” – thus Mda’s drama references Francesca in his title *Our Lady of Benoni*. Taking into account the initial argument of virginity as primary focus in this part of the discussion, Lord Stewart returns blind from his pilgrimage due to the instructions that he is given by the ‘lady of Benoni’ – this suggests the meaninglessness of Lord Stewart’s pilgrimage to Benoni in pursuit of the Virgin. All these events signify the importance of the theme of virginity that is addressed by Zakes Mda in the play.

Taking into account all the arguments in this part of the study, should the Reverend priest be deemed to have acted immorally considering MaDlomo’s argument that the Reverend is respected in the community? Of course, the Reverend Chief should be deemed immoral because his position as a pastor actively restricts him from being implicated in any immoral accusations in the society – also, although virginity testing is primarily concerned with giving moral high ground to young girls who pass the tests, to a certain extent, virginity testers ought to take active responsibility in supporting all women who violently raped of their virginity; MaDlomo’s support of the Reverend Chief

seems ambiguous because she is a virginity tester; which suggests that she should be protecting the woman since her rights are being violated, and that MaDlomo should advocate for virginity – similarly, a pastor is not expected to be implicated in such accusations or any form of crime., Therefore this study argues that theologians would deem the Reverend Chief to have acted immorally because he has already dragged the name of the church or God into mud. For example, Tuplin (2008) states that:

the first five commandments of the Decalogue do not address the mistreatment of one's neighbour (e.g. lying, stealing, murdering, committing adultery), but rather man's approach to God (e.g. creating idols, taking the Lord's name in vain, keeping the Sabbath day holy).

Also, in a societal context, the Reverend Chief would be seen as immoral because many South Africans perceive a church or Christianity as a measurement for determining good morals which naturally disqualifies immoral and evil acts. To this end, the study argues in line with Jucan that morality is a set of rules which individuals in a particular society agree upon as a standard measure to channel their morality.

The tradition of virginity testing in the play seems to qualify the play as a feminist art. Although this study is not concerned with feminist issues, this is a concept that cannot be completely ignored. Also, the term feminist in this study is used from a general perspective as referring to the female. There are a number of issues which concern womanhood such as the rape case, even the title of the play '*Our Lady*' suggests the feminine. Professor, tells MaDlomo of real cases where virginity testing in KZN resulted in the death of many young women. Importantly, this study wishes to examine whether the murdering of young women who could not keep their virginity until the designated age can be judged moral or not – this will be explored taking MaDlomo's support for the Reverend priest into account. In so doing, this will help to discover what the current themes and events in theatre suggest about Post-Apartheid South Africa.

It seems that virginity testing is practised in many different places globally. Also, these different places or societal groups that practise this tradition seem to strongly believe in it regardless of its effect on women. For example, Tucker (2012:xxx) describes

MaDlomo as a 'very complex [character] – feisty and independent but determinedly anti-feminist, with her commitment to virginity testing and her support of the alleged rapist.' Concurrently, a commander of Indonesia's armed forces, General Moeldoko advocates virginity testing since he maintains that this is the only way to determine a female soldiers' morality – hence the title of the article is Probing Vaginas is the only way to test a woman's morality (2015). Similarly, a bursary scheme provided by the Uthukela Municipality in KZN used virginity testing as criteria, this means that the sixteen girls would have to keep their virginity throughout the duration of their university study in order to remain beneficiaries of the bursary, as well as going for virginity testing during holidays (Doodnath, 2016). It seems appropriate when considering the dilemmas created by the character of MaDlomo that the study should seek to probe the issue of morality with regard to the concept and tradition of virginity testing.

In most rural South African societies such as KZN, issues of virginity testing form part of a society's tradition; this means that many young women are expected to attend these seasonal events since they are also assumed to represent the dignity of the family where a young woman is able to maintain her virginity until marriage. In the drama, Professor interrogates MaDlomo about this custom, he continuously asks the position in which the *hymen* is located in the female's private parts (2012:50). He asks these questions because he fails to understand the reliability of these tests, considering the manner in which the tests are done. Moreover, Professor seems heartbroken since he claims to have lost the love of his life because of this tradition, the argument is that when a virgin is deflowered there has to be blood as a symbol of the first engagement in sexual intercourse; but this was not the case when Professor and Thabisile, his wife had sexual intercourse for the first time – it was later that Professor realised that these beliefs are just myths.

For example, in a conversation with MaDlomo, Professor talks about the tradition of virginity testing which resulted in the deaths of some young women because they were considered to be impure since they were no longer virgins. He claims that the tradition emotionally destroyed the love of his life, and further cites real cases of murder:

They may not have killed her physically, but elsewhere people do die. In the United States, in November 2004, Jasmine Archie was murdered by her mother, who forced her to drink bleach because her mother believed she had lost her virginity. ...In many countries where honour killing is part of the culture women are murdered every day by their parents for failing some virginity test. (2012:48)

Considering this scenario, the study seeks to argue that the mere fact that a particular society agrees on certain behavioural standards which are evil – such as the murder of young women who lose their virginity before marriage, for example – these standards should not be accepted simply because the community or society adopts the evil act as a determiner for morality. This means that their judgement of morality should take into account the harm that is caused to the body or the emotions of an individual. Scorgie (2002:58) adds to this debate by stating that the testing is conducted in order to ‘render visible what has, until then, remained invisible: it is intended precisely to both confirm and display to others evidence of the girls’ (im)morality and (im)purity’ (2002:58). In a case where a girl is found to be impure, she is automatically deemed to be immoral, as well as a shame to her family; consequently, some of these girls resort to suicide, whilst some are murdered by their parents in the name of culture or tradition. Now, can a tradition that humiliates the dignity of an individual be considered moral? Chapter two discussed the concept of *Ubuntu* which advocates for humanity and treating other people with sensitivity and respect (Brown, 2002:80). Therefore, general societal norms argue for respect and tolerance. The South African constitution states that all people have got the right to say no to anything imposed on them – in as much as some literary critics have recognised a degeneration of morality in South Africa, also termed moral vacuum in chapter three, imposing virginity testing on young women is immoral, regardless of tradition. Therefore, it seems traditions should not be imposed on people. In addition, this study takes into account that virginity testing can be considered a valuable tradition in many African and some other Western countries; this could be practiced whilst taking into account the rights and the dignity of women, as well as the respect for their bodies.

The virginity testing in the play may have effects on the health of the women who are tested because some of the testers can be deemed unqualified. This suggests that there are many health issues involved in any experiments that are performed on the body. Although this study does not directly explore issues of health, it recognises that the events occurring through the Professor's cousin – the seller of saliva – highlight issues of health, as well as MaDlomo's daughter who is described to be suffering from AIDS with which she was infected when she three months old by a man who believed that having sexual intercourse with a virgin would cure the virus. To this end, the study takes a turn to examine the character of Professor's cousin, the 'seller of saliva' in the play in relation to morality. Moreover, the seller of saliva syndicate seems to highlight both the issues of morality and corruption. Professor chronicles his cousin as one who suffers from HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB), and sells his sputum to people in KZN in order that they gain access to social grants. The Department of Social Development, in collaboration with the Department of Health, used to award social grants to persons with TB so that they were able to get a basic healthy diet, for example. But people like Professor's cousin saw an opportunity to make extra cash by manipulating the system so that they could take care of their other expenses. Stewart persistently asks Professor how he makes his 'riches'? In their park, Professor seems to be the only wealthy character; hence, Lord Stewart wants to be like him. Professor then tells Lord Stewart how he gets his money:

...Back in the village a relative of mine became known throughout the Valley of a Thousand Hills as a seller of saliva... He was on anti-retrovirals and was getting a disability grant from the government. But he was a resourceful man and the grant not enough... So he earned more money by selling his saliva. He had a sign on the door with prices for the day: 'Buy Saliva Cheap – Special Sale Price R30.00'. ..They came and paid and he drew the biggest chunks of phlegm from the depth of his soul. You go to the clinic and tell them of your persistent and unceasing cough... And behold! The tests show you have the worst kind of TB imaginable. (2012:26)

Professor further explains that this syndicate was later adopted by many people, including people in Johannesburg. From a moral perspective, should the seller of saliva be judged harshly, as well as the people who later joined the syndicate? Of course, pure moralists such as theologians will judge the behaviour of Professor's cousin as immoral. The study argued earlier that theologians would judge based on the mind (Tuplin, 2008). The fact that the cousin would not openly go to a public setting such as a town where there are government officials and conduct his business there suggests that he knew that he was committing a crime. Although he does not physically harm any person, there is a criminal act behind this business; as a result, this should be labelled as immoral. Universal morality forbids similar criminal acts such as corruption as advocated by Birnbancher (2013:48) that in most moralities, the moral principles applied to physicians, priests, teachers or civil servants differ significantly from the moral rules [which apply] to the man in the street. This includes the misuse of public services.

In summary, morality issues in Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* are clearly seen when one examines the drama from a perspective of women since the underlying theme of the events occurring in the seem to be concerned with women. To this end, morality issues in the drama are dependent on context, and reflect the real issues of the society as Mda claims he must do.

4.3 CORRUPTION ISSUES IN MDA'S *OUR LADY OF BENONI*

In his article Political Corruption: An Introduction to the Issues, Amundsen (1999) explores various issues which enshrine the concept of corruption. His aim is to 'make corruption into an analytically useful concept for social sciences, and in particular political science' (Amundsen, 1999:1). He further states that issues of corruption are critically deep with regard to "the actors, initiators and profiteers, how it is done, and to what extent it is practiced." By actors, Amundsen refers to the people who commit the corruption. However, in the article, Amundsen (1999:6) discusses a theory of redistributive corruption. The theory claims that 'the state is the weaker part in the state-society relationship' in terms of corruption. Generally in politics, corruption is assumed

to be from government officials to the public – this would be in a case where a mayor of a particular city utilises public funds for private gain, for example. In essence, the theory argues that the kind of corruption that occurs in this kind of context is one whereby the general-public illegally and immorally use funds and any other resources of state institutions for their own benefit; this is without following proper channels for acquiring the resources from the respective institution. Considering the above discussions, this part of the study examines issues of corruption in Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*. Among other approaches, the study uses the redistribute theory. Also, the study reveals what these suggest about Post-Apartheid South Africa.

A closer look at Professor's cousin and his tactics of making additional money suggests that the redistributive theory is also about issues of corruption being from 'below-to-above' (Amundeson, 1999:5). Before examining the role of Professor's cousin in relation to the theory; consider this example of real events in South Africa: research shows that the public sector officials are involved in numerous incidences of corruption, this includes the public itself – moreover, van Vuuren (2004) states that there are traffic officials who are 'implicated in the most common type of bribery recorded' (2004), which among other issues include traffic fines and the issuing of false driver's licenses. It seems to have become a norm that one cannot easily pass a driver's license test in the traffic department without '*buying a cool-drink*' for the examiner, or the traffic department official – the term *cool-drink* is used to refer to bribery money. As a result of this kind of corruption being normalised in society, the general public, especially taxi drivers and learner drivers, offer these bribes to the officials, and this confirms the ideology argued by the theory that in this context, the public benefits more than the state.

For example, in the drama *Our Lady of Benoni*, Professor's cousin sells his sputum because he needs more money in order 'to support his many wives and mistresses' (2012:26). The issue of selling saliva in order to access social grants is by its nature corruption. Considering van der Walt's (2003) concept of 'moral vacuum' as discussed in chapter three and the fact that societies seem to have normalised corruption, the

study argues that there is an urgent need by both the general public and those responsible for public funds and other resources to reach conclusions on measures that need to be taken in order to overcome this challenge. However, taking into account the ideologies undertaken by the redistributive theory, it can be seen that issues of corruption are not just from top-down, they also move from bottom-up.

This part of the study looks at the issues of corruption reflecting from the role of the Lady of Benoni, Francesca Zackey, as presented by Zakes Mda. The study approaches this debate from a theology perspective, and it considers some real events as seen in the current Post-Apartheid South Africa. The Holy Bible warns people about false prophets:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD. (Jeremiah, 23:16)

Considering this scripture, there have been numerous events regarding pastors who put the lives of congregants in danger by making them eat and drink, or even apply to their skin materials that may be hazardous to their health. For example, a story about a pastor who sprayed DOOM (an insect poison) onto his congregants became a sensation on social media and many news agencies including NEWS24 in the year 2016. Because people believe that pastors like the “Doom” pastor speak to God, they tend to believe that God has vested ‘superpowers’ in them to perform miracles. However, the Chairperson, Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva, of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Culture voiced the intention to ‘push for a legislation to stop pastors from taking advantage of church members’ (NEWS24, 2016); and further stated

The challenge is that our people are vulnerable because of poverty, inequality and unemployment. When you look for answers and you

can't find them, it gets to a stage where you become very vulnerable.
(NEWS24, 2016)

As part of her reasoning, Mkhwanazi-Xaluva's believes that the reasons for these kinds of events begin when the poverty-stricken people such as the congregants in the church of the DOOM pastor try to find answers to their problems or issues, yet their situations continue to seem impossible. This seems to be the case with Lord Stewart. Lord Stewart goes on a pilgrimage to seek answers to what happened to his girlfriend, Danni. Because he seems to have run out of plans on how to find his girlfriend, he leaves for Benoni to consult the Madonna, the Lady of Benoni who claims to have physically met the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. When he gets to Benoni, he is instructed by the 'prophetess' Francesca to look at the sun, and he is assured that he will see the Virgin Mary; but instead his eyes got burned as he kept on looking stubbornly as per the instruction of Francesca (Mda, 2012). With reference to the cited scripture of Jeremiah which speaks about prophets who just say what is in their minds, the study perceives this kind of act by Francesca and the Doom pastor as corrupt and to some extent immoral. As cited in chapter two, Gould (1991:468) regards corruption as a phenomenon that is concerned with unethical and immoral acts which conflict the norms of a society. Considering this definition, it can be argued that despite her belief systems, Francesca acted outside moral standards because her response to Lord Stewart in the end suggests that she does not care about what happened to her clients. When Lord Stewart asks what will happen to him since he is no longer able to see, her response is that:

...it's out of my hands. People look at the sun at their own risk. I am not the sun. (Mda, 2012)

This reveals that false prophets and prophetess do not care what happens to their congregants when their stunts are not successful; thus this is the case with corrupt individuals who are serving in government departments, they do not care about what

happens to the poor. These discussions suggest that Mda points out the extent of corruption in the current South Africa.

4.4 CLASS ISSUES IN MDA'S *OUR LADY OF BENONI*

Generally, in South Africa and elsewhere, many people seem to assume that the concept of class is associated with monetary issues only, whereas this is a concept which requires critical analysis in order for one to understand its breadth. As argued by Atkinson and Brandolini (2011:1), this concept needs to be explored considering issues or approaches other than income - this includes social positions such as the socio-economic standards of individuals and the moral perspectives an individual holds in a community. Tarknishvili and Tarknishvili (2013:24) use the term "inequitable socioeconomic standards" to mean that those who hold social positions may unduly benefit without taking into consideration morality issues which govern the particular society. In addition, the study considers Wright's (1991:1) notion of class; he argues that 'people locate themselves within a social structure of inequality as well as 'the relationship of people [according] to income-generating, resources or assets of various sorts' (1991:1). Lastly, Wright (199:1) refers to the Marxist perspective which advocates for a classless society – in the case of this study, this can be referred to as a moral-free society. It can be seen that issues of class are concerned with inequalities in society, and that there is always a group of people or social structure which share the same values. Considering these brief discussions, this part of the study explores the concept of class in relation to events occurring in Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*. However, it must be noted that Mda's drama mainly explores themes other than those of class – this means that there are limited issues of class to be explored in the drama. But because morality and corruption cannot be studied in isolation without taking into account the concept of class, the study examines some of the class issues which are present in the drama in order to add value in the discussions of morality and corruption.

With reference to Atkinson's and Brandolini's (2011:1) explanation of class issues- that they are not only related to income, Professor and the Reverend Priest in the play, *Our*

Lady of Benoni, seem to clearly represent this ideology. Atkinson and Brandolini maintain that the concept of class takes into account one's position in the society, and to some extent, this may include the individual's moral perspectives (2011:1). For instance, the Reverend Priest is accused of rape; there are women who are protesting in his favour including MaDlomo, a former virginity tester, currently a cleaner at the park. The women are supporting the Priest because of his position in society. For example, people who hold high profile positions in societies are likely to be favoured by the majority of that particular community or society; this is the case with the reverend priest who is compared to Jacob Zuma – in Mda's words, the storyline on the priest refers to President Jacob Zuma's rape trial in 2016 (du Plessis, 2014). Mda explains some of the comments made by MaDlomo in the play:

The things she says there, for instance that it was very silly of this woman to complain when she was raped by such an important man, she should be proud – all those things were said by women who were toyi toying outside the courtroom where (President Jacob) Zuma was heard (in his 2006 rape trial)..... I went there, I interviewed them, and I took these words, you see, I took them word for word, because what I was interested in was why are these women there in support of somebody who is accused of violating another woman?

Because of these events in the play, the study argues that class issues still exist in Post-Apartheid South Africa and the position that one holds in the society plays a pivotal role with regard to class. Although this study is not primarily concerned with issues of class pertaining to race, as well as to discrimination in terms of skin colour, it references Maishe Maponya's *The Hungry Earth*, which some critics such as Penfold (2013) and Loots (2007) among others, regard as a resistance play. Briefly, the play explores the Apartheid times' injustices which were faced by black people in South Africa. White people were favoured by the system because of their skin colour, and this ensured many benefits to them because they were white as compared to hardships black people faced. This can be extrapolated to the situation of the Reverend Priest.

Because he holds a highly ranked position in the society, he is favoured even when he does evil to the people. Therefore, hierarchy and social situation play a significant role in class issues.

Similarly, Professor is also seen as prominent in the park because of his position among the other characters. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines a professor as one who 'teaches or professes special knowledge of an art, sport or occupation requiring skill.' Considering this definition, playwrights may sometimes name their characters as per the role that each of them plays in the drama. Thus, among the characters, Professor is seen as one who is knowledgeable since he always has something to read, and he is also conducting research on issues of virginity; this is the case with professors at different universities, they conduct research and they spend most of their time reading. Because of this, the study perceives Professor as a character who has the most respected position at the park. For example, he argues and defends his arguments, this is seen when he interrogates MaDlomo about the location of virginity, whether there is anybody who has seen it or touched it before – as a virginity tester MaDlomo may technically be expected to have answers for these kinds of questions. In summary, one may argue that MaDlomo is afraid of losing her position as virginity tester since she defends in all ways in her argument with Professor.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In summary, this chapter examined issues of morality, corruption and class in Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*. The chapter examined the manner in which the morality of a society can be measured, it went on to discuss the extent at which one can be deemed immoral, as well as some corruption issues and class issues in the drama. Lastly, Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* seems primarily to explore women's issues including virginity testing. Therefore, it becomes clear that other than the morality and corruption issues of this study, Mda's drama addresses societal issues of Post- Apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF VAN GRAAN'S *SOME MOTHER'S SONS*

5.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa has been confronted by numerous cases concerning its justice system in recent years. This means that there have been numerous cases which have placed the judiciary system of the country under scrutiny; such cases include among others, the Oscar Pistorius murder case wherein many argued that he was handed down a lenient sentencing given the nature of the crime that he committed. In addition, there was the Nkandla judgment by Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng which pronounced that the President, Jacob Zuma, 'broke his oath to uphold the constitution' (Grootes, 2016); despite this, no action was taken. This questioned issues of the holding of all citizens accountable for their evil actions regardless of their positions in society. Van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons* questions the fairness of South Africa's justice system in Post-Apartheid times. It also explores issues regarding the evil events of the Apartheid times where many black people, especially men, were killed – hence, the title of the play is *Some Mother's Sons* because of the many young male comrades who were killed during the Apartheid times. Vusi explains this to Braam:

I used to fantasise about taking revenge against Van Jaarsveld.
Like if I ever met him in the street I would push him in front of a bus.
...Like he tortured so many mother's sons. (2009:100)

Although this study is not primarily concerned with issues of the judiciary, it takes into account that the events in van Graan's drama are primary concerned with the justice

system of South Africa in Post-Apartheid times, and this highlights issues of corruption and class. Therefore, this chapter examines morality issues, corruption issues and class issues in van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*. Chapter one of the study proposed a suitable concept, the Post-Apartheid Plutocracy period, to refer to the period between 2009 and 2017 with a reflection on the events occurring in van Graan's drama. The chapter explains the relevance of the concept Post-Apartheid plutocracy with examples from real events and the events in the drama. Additionally, the chapter discusses each of the themes outlined above with examples from the text and real events. Lastly, it must be noted that most of what occurs in van Graan's drama are issues of class and corruption rather than issues of morality; however, the study will explore all these issues as far as possible.

5.2 POST-APARTHEID PLUTOCRACY PERIOD

Because of its rich history, South Africa is divided into periods wherein each of the periods signifies real events or issues which occurred during that particular time. The periods outlined by Jamal (2009:2), namely the Pre-Post-Apartheid period, the Early-Post-Apartheid and the Post-Apartheid dating from 1990 to 2002, respectively, does not include the modern period; hence, the study suggests Post-Apartheid-Plutocracy period. By definition, the Miriam Webster dictionary explains that the concept of plutocracy is concerned with a government that is based on the wealthy class. This means that only the rich are entrusted with leadership roles. Because this study is not concerned with the politics of leadership, it uses the concept of plutocracy to mean or argue that the modern period favours the wealthy or rich class especially with regard to the justice system of South Africa. By modern period, the chapter refers to the period dating from 2009 until the current year.

In addition, most of the real events occurring in this period reveal issues of corruption and class, significantly resulting in the questioning of the morality of the wealthy class. Because of this, the study strives to prove that indeed the events occurring in the period dating from 2009 to 2016, as well as 2017 suggests that South Africa is plutocracy. The chapter does not suggest that van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons* was written in between

2009 and 2017, it suggests that the events explored by this playwright are relevant to the modern period. Moreover, the study uses a similar approach to the concept of plutocracy in relation to '*William Graham Sumner's ideology of plutocracy*' – *who is William Graham Sumner?* Sumner is a 'classical liberal and a critic of plutocracy' whose main 'interests were American history and economic theory, which he combined in a series of biographies' (Trask, 2004:3). According to Trask (2004:10) Sumner did not use the word plutocracy to 'mean the rule of wealth' since he believed that:

wealth *should* have more political power than the mass. Rather, he meant a type of government in which effective control rested with men of wealth who sought to use *political* means to increase their wealth.

Sumner's ideology suggests the concept is not only concerned with a government led by the rich, it also refers to a government in which those who are in power sought to continue enriching themselves even more though looting state resources for private gain. The ideology in this study is that the concept can also be used to refer to events wherein the system of plutocracy favours those who are rich to gain more privileges from the system. For example, there are people who are able to escape the hands of justice because they can afford good lawyers. In van Graan's drama, Braam asks Vusi a question: 'How many people who are as guilty as sin get off scot-free because they have good lawyers?' (2009:88). What is important to note regarding this question is the issue of affording good lawyers since in a plutocratic government or country, the system seems to favour those who have wealth; this illustrates that in fact a particular country could be seen as class orientated.

5.3 MORALITY ISSUES IN VAN GRAAN'S *SOME MOTHER'S SONS*

Other than the themes concerned in this study, van Graan explores various issues which concern the modern society. Some of these issues are death, crime, and racism among others. In the drama, there are two main characters, Vusi and Braam, both human rights lawyers, and each of them has spent some time in prison as a detainee, respectively. van Graan's drama is a series of flashbacks; this means that one scene

is where Vusi is in prison and Braam acts as his attorney; in the following scene Braam is in prison and Vusi acts as his attorney. Braam has shot three men, killing two and brutally wounding one the men. He argues that he is not remorseful at all because the men were criminals; as his lawyer, Vusi tries to make him see that despite the fact that those men were criminals, Braam should have handled the matter differently.

van Graan's drama explores issues relating to the justice system of South Africa. The manner in which Braam handled the issue of the three men by shooting them, and considering the fact that he is a lawyer; the study suggests that he has acted immorally. Because of this, the study recognises Tuplin's ideology of *Virtual Morality*. As discussed in chapter four that Tuplin (2008) views morality from two perspectives: namely the sociological perspective and the theological perspective. His argument is that sociologists judge one's morality because of the physical actions which are regarded as immoral whereas theologians deem one to have acted immorally by judging the angry mind. Chapter four primarily focused on the theological perspective rather than the sociological perspective; this chapter focuses on both of these perspectives.

As argued by Shavell (2002:227) that there has to be a measurement for morality issues, this study continues to question the point at which one can be deemed to have acted immorally. Morality issues involve among other elements, the laws, the rules and the principles which govern a particular group of people or society; this includes the right and the wrong actions by individuals in a society, and this means that all people living in that particular community must live by the direct rules and laws outlined and agreed upon within that particular geographic space (Shavell, 2002; Jucan, n.d.). Firstly, let us explore Shavell's sociological approach to this debate. As outlined earlier, sociologists judge one's moral behaviour by taking into account the physical acts; van Graan's drama has numerous events wherein this is seen, and many of these events make up a reflection of the current South Africa.

Vusi and Braam are arguing about Braam's murder case where he shot three men inside a court of law. Vusi wants to represent Braam as his lawyer yet Braam is refusing his help because he feels that what he has done is justice to many people. The reason Braam believes that he did the right thing to shoot the three men is because

they were criminals. The primary issue here is that Braam murdered two men and badly wounded the third one, and he feels that he did the right thing since they were criminals, and this is because they killed his wife and child (2009:106). Vusi asks Braam whether he regrets the shootings:

VUSI: Do you regret?

BRAAM: Of course. If we had moved to Cape Town, probably none of this would have happened.

VUSI: I meant the shootings.

BRAAM: The shootings? Do I regret the shootings?

VUSI: Yes.

BRAAM: [*becoming increasingly agitated*]: Do I regret shooting those bastards?
Are you kidding?

VUSI: You don't feel any remorse?

BRAAM: You already asked me that.

VUSI: And you didn't answer.

BRAAM: Will they reduce my sentence if I do? Is that it?

VUSI: I just want to know.

BRAAM: You want me to act like I'm sorry?

VUSI: Only if you are ... (2009:75)

Considering Braam's response to his actions and his reasoning, some people may support his argument and actions since he believes that the men whom he killed were murderers and rapists among other crimes. Other people, like Vusi, may argue that although these men were criminals or had committed serious crimes, Braam had no right to kill them. With reference to the sociologists' perspective, Braam has harmed the

body of the three men: 'I shot three guys. Two of them are dead. ...it was premeditated, planned and executed' (2009:73). In this quotation Braam admits to his actions. However, this study argues that despite the fact he actively believes that he did the right thing by murdering and wounding the men respectively, this is morally wrong. Of course sociologists would judge Braam as an immoral person because his physical actions harmed the physical bodies of the three men (Tuplin, 2008).

Theologians would judge Braam as an immoral character. They believe that every action that a person takes, the mind is always engaged. Their argument is that God judges both the mind and the physical actions because whatever a person does, his or her thoughts are active; as a result, the action is perceived to be premeditated (Tuplin, 2008). In relation to this approach, Braam's mind was engaged throughout the plot to shoot the three men; in this case, Tuplin's (2008) *Virtual Morality* suggests that he will be judged to be immoral on two counts, by both the theologians and the sociologists. In addition, Vusi is upset with Braam's actions considering the additional and potent fact that Braam is a lawyer. He stresses the concern that as a lawyer, Braam should have known better than to solve the problem in a brutal manner, instead he should have used the judiciary to bring these criminals to book. This seeks to add that even from a law perspective Braam has acted immorally. Vusi tells:

You've set us back, Braam. Three years. Maybe more. We're trying to build respect for the rule of law. Respect for human rights. Respect for life. And then you go ... and betray us. (2009:87)

It can be seen that there is not any standardised morality that can support Braam's actions. What I mean by standardised morality is an agreed rule or principle that a particular society would discuss and adopt to govern its people. Many societies in South Africa use the concept of *Ubuntu* rather than resorting to violence.

Lastly, Vusi questions the issue of Mob justice and the kind of morality that it has in societies, and he concludes that this will only leave what van der Walt (2003:51) termed a moral vacuum since he states that this 'cannot be good for the future' (2009:95). Therefore, issues of humanity among societies do not involve mob justice even in cases

wherein the society believes that law enforcement is not doing its work satisfactorily. This means that mob justice is also immoral as per the two perspectives discussed above because in South Africa as in other countries, murder is a crime regardless of what the person has done (CALD, 2008).

Morality issues also vary from person to person, or even more broadly; it may vary from community to community. Nel (2008) talks about 'hybrid moral construction' where he argues that the thought which says 'religion is the foundation of African morality can be partially endorsed' by allowing the mix of different cultures. As discussed in chapter two, Nel (2008) argues that there are scholars who are attempting to define African morality within the parameters of a complex global society. The concept of global society is used in this study to refer to culture conflicts. Chapter three of the study explored cultural conflict issues in John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* whereby the cultural conflicts in the play primarily underlie the theme of death – this refers to the manner in which the Makhaya family conduct their funerals as opposed to the European way of cremation. This example seeks to highlight the issues of cultural differences with reference to morality issues varying from community to community.

In relation to van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*, the issue of cultural conflict may be unrecognisable to a lay person who reads drama for leisure or pleasure as compared to one who critiques literature; this study finds that there are issues of cultural conflict in the play. In many African cultures, it is forbidden for a young person to call or address an elderly person by his or her first name since it is regarded as disrespectful, instead the young person needs to use *baba* (Zulu for father), for example. In recent events of South Africa's parliament, President Jacob Zuma was referred to as *uBaba ka Duduzani*, meaning 'Duduzani's father' by the Economic Freedom Fighters parliamentarians. The speaker of parliament, Baleka Mbete requested that the members should withdraw their remarks since it was 'un-parliamentary'; but the EFF's Mbuyiseni Ndlozi rejected the ruling and said that:

uBaba ka Duduzane must suspend himself first before appearing here [parliament]. We reject that Eurocentric ruling that says we cannot refer to Zuma as uBaba ka Duduzane. Unless he rejects his son, in African culture that is respectful. (Mathope, 2017)

Although one may argue that the EFF's parliamentarians are in violation of the parliament's rules since all members of parliament are addressed as *honourable(s)*, the study approaches this notion from an African perspective. This refers to Ndlozi's utterances that 'in [the] African culture [it is] respectful' to refer to an elderly person in the manner in which they did to the president. He also uses the word 'Eurocentric' to show that there is a conflict of cultures in this regard (Mathope, 2017). Taking into account these discussions, in van Graan's drama there is a conversation between Vusi and Braam about addressing older people by names; Braam refers to Vusi's mother by her first name, Sylvia, and Vusi asks what his mother's name is, and Braam replies:

BRAAM: Anna.

VUSI: What do you call her?

BRAAM: Ma ...

VUSI: Not Anna?

BRAAM: She's my mother.

...

VUSI: She [Sylvia, Vusi's mother] could be your mother. And you call her Sylvia? Is that because she's just the tea lady, white boy?
(2009:80)

Reflecting from these events, it can be seen that there are distinctions between Braam's and Vusi's cultural way of doing things. However, in the African culture, it is considered disrespectful to refer to an elderly person by first name whereas in many Eurocentric cultures this is acceptable. Therefore, from one perspective, Braam can be deemed to have acted immorally when reflecting on his actions from an African cultural

perspective; similarly, the EFF parliamentarians can be deemed to have acted immorally because the setting and laws of parliament do not allow the actions and system of addresses used by the parliamentarians. In summary, the study concurs with Idang's (2015:97) ideology which notes that 'there are underlying similarities shared by many African societies [regarding morality] which, when contrasted with other cultures, reveal a wide gap of difference.' This means that although there are shared values or beliefs among cultures or between Vusi and Braam, there are some great distinctions which one may not change independently.

5.4 CORRUPTION ISSUES IN VAN GRAAN'S *SOME MOTHER'S SONS*

There seems to be numerous schools of thought which define the concept of corruption according to their perceptions. However, this chapter uses the moralist perspective defined in chapter two which explains that corruption is an:

immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society, causing loss of respect for and confidence in duly constituted authority. (Gould, 1991:468)

In this plutocratic period, South Africa has been faced with countless issues of corruption involving government officials including people who are supposed to protect the constitution of the land. As these corruption issues continue to occur, there is 'loss of respect ...and confidence' (Gould, 1991:468) on the institutions, the departments and the authorities which are involved in these corruption scandals. Most of the corruption issues are nurtured and protected by politicians (Balboa & Medalla, 2006:4). As previously mentioned, Sumner sees a plutocratic state as one where 'effective control rested with men of wealth who sought to use *political* means to increase their wealth.' As these politicians continue to unduly benefit from state resources, they are committing corruption, and this is a crime.

For example, Braam is agitated by the crime rate in South Africa, and this is the reason he feels no remorse for shooting the three men. In conversation with Vusi, Braam argues that the people who fought against the evil Apartheid system did not fight so that

they could be freed from the Apartheid laws to becoming slaves of a new form of Apartheid, namely crime and corruption among others. He says:

Vusi, is this what we were struggling for? To be held hostage by thugs? Rapists? Murderers? Out of Apartheid's frying pan, into crime's fire! What does it take to feel safe nowadays? Become a cabinet minister with legions of bodyguards? Maybe Dick, Tom and Sipho are the betrayed. Betrayed by politicians! By incompetent police! By the law! (2009:87)

Braam speaks about betrayal in the quotation. According to Krantz (2006:222) betrayal is usually concerned with 'wickedness, corruption and other violations of moral order.' This suggests that when an individual violates his or her moral order or standards, he or she is corrupt. This is the case with Braam; he shot three men, two of whom died and one was critically wounded – as a lawyer, Braam has betrayed his oath as an attorney of the high court of the country since among other things as a legal expert and human rights lawyer, he is expected to protect the constitution. Therefore, Braam is deemed to be corrupt as per the justice system of the country; it is for these reasons that he is perceived to suffer from a moral breakdown, and that he is in prison for a possible moral regeneration.

Another form of corruption which suggests that many South African officials or people who hold high positions are wicked is the issue of nepotism. As previously mentioned van Graan's drama is a series of flashbacks; in this case, Vusi is in prison, and Braam acts as his lawyer. Braam wants to help Vusi to be released from prison through nepotism, in the modern day, this is known as 'having connections'. Before considering the events between Vusi and Braam, it is important to explain what nepotism means in this study. The term nepotism is from a Latin etymology 'nepos' meaning nephew (Kiechel, 1984:143). The concept is mainly concerned with the misuse of state resource or any office that is meant for servicing the public 'in favour of family members' (Büte, 2011:187); and it is associated with behaviour that is unprofessional. In terms of this study, nepotism is regarded as behaviour that is immoral or corrupt because any behaviour that is unprofessional, it is unacceptable; thus corruption and immorality are

unacceptable. Braam spoke to his father who happened to know the police minister, Le Grange, as they attended church together, and he is confident that the minister's assistance or interference is the best route for Vusi to escape his detention. It is on these grounds that Vusi is promised his freedom. Nonetheless, Vusi was adamant that he would not leave prison because he felt that he would have betrayed his fellow comrades if he agreed to Braam's offer of releasing him through his connections. Vusi asks Braam how he managed to get inside the prison cells because all 180-day detention prisoners are not allowed to see lawyers:

VUSI: So how did you get in?

BRAAM: My father was at university with Le Grange. And he sometimes goes to my father's church when he's in Germiston. I asked him to phone Le Grange to allow me to see you.

VUSI: [*gob-smacked*]: He phoned Le Grange?

BRAAM: Le Grange wasn't very keen.

VUSI: Okay, I think it's better you go now.

BRAAM: What do you means?

VUSI: Your father just phoned the Minister of Police?

BRAAM: Yes...

VUSI: I don't want to be associated with anyone who's so close to that... that criminal bastard. (2009:93)

In the above quotation Vusi refers to the minister as a criminal, and he is adamant to remain loyal to his principles. The study perceives Braam's offer to Vusi as corruption because this is not a proper channel, a prisoner will be freed because his attorney *knows somebody who knows* officials in high positions; this is perceived as immorality as well. As a result of this, the ordinary citizens who do not know people or have friends in high profile offices will remain detained because of the system.

5.5 CLASS ISSUES IN VAN GRAAN'S *SOME MOTHER'S SONS*

Although Atkinson states that the concept of class is not solely concerned with monetary issues and that it requires critical examination beyond income, this chapter mainly focuses on the issue of money. The argument here is that it is rather complex to examine class as a theme without considering monetary issues. Similarly to Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni*, class issues in van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons* seem to be clearly portrayed by events relating to positions or hierarchy and class with reference to race.

Wright's (1991:1) ideology of class outlined in chapter two and chapter four maintains that 'people locate themselves within a social structure of inequality.' The issue of inequality relates to positions because people who are regarded as upper class live their lives differently from the lower class people. This is seen in both Mda's and van Graan's dramas. For example, Braam tells Vusi that he is not happy with the crime rate in the current South Africa. He goes further to mention that in order for one to feel safe, he or she should 'become a cabinet minister with legions of bodyguards' (2009:87). In another conversation, Vusi refuses Braam's help releasing him from prison because Braam's father spoke to the Minister of Police in order to help him out. The most important issue to be noted here is the position of cabinet minister. To a certain extent, cabinet ministers are entrusted with powers on the specific portfolio that they hold in government, and they are given certain security benefits such as bodyguards; they can use these powers within their jurisdiction and as enshrined in the constitution. The position itself alienates that particular minister from the general public or lower class by perpetuating the 'social structure of inequalities' (Wright, 1991:1). With this being said, it can be seen that issues of class exist in 21st century, hence South Africa is perceived as a plutocracy in this study.

In relation to Wright's ideology regarding positions, the study takes into account Vusi's and Braam's positions as lawyers. Professional careers such as Law, Engineering, Architecture, and Social work among others, play a pivotal role in issues of inequality. Teaching, previously held in high esteem in South Africa, now seems to have lost its status and is seen simply as tantamount to menial employment. Although Vusi and Braam do not duel much on this issue in their conversation, there seems to be negative

stigma that surrounds the teaching profession. This means that many students or career guided individuals seem to resort to teaching as a final option for a profession. The notion here is to compare both Law and Teaching professions to demonstrate that indeed professions contribute to the issue inequalities. For example, on the one hand Lenz (2011), states that many teachers have indicated that they would not encourage their children to choose teaching as a profession 'because it has such low-status, [is so] low-paying, [and is a] giant headache of a job' (2011). On the other hand, Law is perceived to be among the greatest professions since it is argued that 'a law degree does not limit you to a career as an attorney or an advocate' (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development); this means that one can move from one department to another in the legal fraternity, and the profession is client based – thus this guarantees financial stability.

In the drama, van Graan highlights the above issue in a conversation between Vusi and Braam. Braam tells Vusi that his mother would like him to become a lawyer, but Vusi sees this as impractical because of the past Apartheid injustices. Their conversation unfolds as follows:

BRAAM: There are different ways to fight for your freedom.
Imagine what a difference you could make as a ...

VUSI: As a what? What does a black man with a degree become?
A teacher?

BRAAM: I was going to say lawyer.

VUSI: Lawyer?

BRAAM: Use the system against itself?

VUSI: Braam, you don't know what you are talking about. You talk to me like I'm white. It doesn't happen in my world like happens in yours.

BRAAM: It may be more difficult for you now, but think of the future. The country is going to need skilled professionals. Black professionals. Doctors, accountants, engineers, lawyers ...(2009:91)

As observed from the conversation between these two characters, it can be seen that class issues overlapped race issues or inequalities during the Apartheid times in South Africa. Currently, the inequalities are seen through one's professional position and the financial income it generates, because realistically, one who earns a moderate to low monthly income, cannot live the same lifestyle as one who is in the upper income bracket hence, there are upper class and lower class groups based on both employment status and income generated.

The legacy of Apartheid seems to be enduring in the lives of many South Africans. According to Gibson (2003:774) 'the legacy of apartheid is a legacy of inequality—economic inequality, social inequality, and political inequality—and especially the unequal evolution of South Africa's political culture.' This buttresses the notion that inequality issues still exist in Post-Apartheid South Africa. For example, van Graan explores the legacy of Apartheid in his drama. He presents Vusi's mother who is described as a tea lady and to a certain extent Vusi believes that Braam is disrespecting her for referring to her by her first name, Sylvia – this is can be argued to be a stigma that is attached to the race issues or social inequalities of the Apartheid times; hence, Vusi feels that Braam is referring to his mother from a 'black and white' approach. Because of these issues, the study argues that some issues of inequality of class are perpetrated as a result of Apartheid legacies.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In summary, this chapter examined van Graan's drama, *Some Mother's Sons*. Like the previous chapters, this chapter focused on the three main themes explored in this study namely morality, corruption and class. The chapter also discussed the concept of plutocracy and its relevance to real South African events and to this study. The chapter found that indeed van Graan's drama explores issues of morality, corruption and class

in in relation to South Africa's real events. Also, most of the events in the drama are primarily concerned with the justice system of South Africa, and these clearly portray the many injustices that are facing South Africa in relation to the three themes and other morality issues.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study was to examine morality issues, corruption issues and class issues in South African Post-Apartheid contemporary drama. The study used three dramas namely John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth*, Zakes Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* and Mike van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*. Each of these plays has their own underlying themes which the authors aimed to explore or address; and they are each designated for a specific period. However, for the purpose of this study, focus was given primarily to issues relating to the three main themes concerned in the study. The problem noted in this was that there is possible reinvention of Apartheid issues in Post-Apartheid South African drama; and the study aimed discovering whether morality and corruption have replaced protest and race as themes of concern in Post-Apartheid South African dramas. Among other questions, the study investigated whether South African Post-Apartheid playwrights reflect real events of morality and corruption in their works; and what these themes suggest about the current South Africa, as well as finding out whether there are any connections between class issues and morality as presented in the dramas. Although, each of chapter has its own brief conclusion, this chapter seeks to conclude the discussions in the study.

6.2 THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two of the study looked at literature concerning morality issues and corruption issues. At the same time, the study explored the development of South African theatre with the aim of discovering whether there is a shift in terms of the themes explored by playwrights in their works – and the study found that indeed there is a shift in terms of issues explored by playwrights. This notion of finding an alternative rather than restricting the art to protest literature was advocated for by Edson (2006:1). Moreover, the chapter explained what the concept of *Ubuntu* entails; this is particularly important because issues of morality seem to be complementary with the concept. The concept

suggests that people of all colours need to be humane; similarly, when discussing issues of morality, any society would assume good ethical codes; this means that one has to portray good standards as determined by that particular society. It is for this reason that the study explored the concept of *Ubuntu*.

6.3 THE DISCUSSION OF THE PLAYS

Each of the dramas concerned in this study is discussed in a separate chapter. As stipulated in the introductory section, the three plays differ in terms of their underlying themes as explored by the playwrights. However, the concerned themes namely morality, corruption and class were successfully discussed due to the events in the plays.

John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* carries a strong theme of cultural conflicts and betrayal as seen through the characters of Siphon and Themba, and this study used these issues to examine issues of morality. Through cultural issues, one is able to determine the moral standards of an individual and the community as a whole. The study also found that Kani's drama explores some real South African events such as the TRC.

Zakes Mda is regarded as one of the best South African playwrights, hence, his play explores numerous issues and it allows room for criticism because of the variety of the events in the play. The underlying theme in Mda's drama is virginity testing. Some of the characters in the drama are immoral and corrupt. For example, Professor's cousin who sells saliva contaminated with TB, is both immoral and corrupt as seen in the discussions in chapter four; also, the Lady of Benoni, Francesca Zackey is corrupt since she instructs people to do things that she is not certain about. This serves as evidence that the current South Africa has numerous issues of false prophets and prophetess.

Some Mother's Sons is primarily concerned about the justice system of South Africa. The study found that van Graan's drama more successfully presented the theme of corruption in the play as compared to the other two themes, morality and class.

6.4 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In conclusion, the study has indicated that South African playwrights reflect real events of morality, corruption and class in their works. This means that contemporary playwrights such as Mda, Kani and van Graan have shifted from addressing issues of the Apartheid times; instead they now explore social issues rather than protest issues of political resistance. As seen in the respective chapters, the issues that these playwrights explore are complementary to real events of the contemporary South Africa. For example, Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* examines various social issues including rape and virginity among others. The question of rape remains a social issue in the current South Africa, so does the issue of virginity testing. For instance, Mda uses the 2015 Zuma-rape case to clearly explore the issue of rape (du Plessis, 2012); this proves that many playwrights do not fictionalise issues, they reflect real events in their craft.

In addition, the three themes suggest that the current South Africa suffers from morality issues, corruption issues, and that the country is a class based society. Regarding morality issues, the study referred to Tuplin's *Virtual Morality* who argues that issues of morality are examined beyond the physical action performed by an individual – he claims that the mind plays a significant role in the process (2008). Tuplin's ideology suggests that whether it an act of corruption or of discriminating against another in terms of class, as long as the action is against societal norms this would be deemed immoral because the mind was engaged in the process; this means that the particular individual had ample time to think through the consequences of his or her action. This is the case with Braam in van Graan's *Some Mother's Sons*; his action is immoral because 'it was premeditated' (2009:73).

The discussions in this study suggest that there are numerous incidences of corruption in the country from both the general public; in this case, Professor's cousin in Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni* who sells his TB infected saliva to people who want to illegally access social grants of the sick; and the public officials, Le Grange who is a police minister in van Graan's drama, and grants favours to friends. Le Grange grants some favours to

people whom he knows so that they are released from prison without following proper protocol; this is corruption, thus corruption is deemed as immoral in this study. Also, La Grange's actions perpetuate issues of a class based society thereby creating inequalities in the country. This means that those who are not known to public officials such as Le Grange will not benefit, as a result, the country can be classified a class orientated nation.

Importantly, there are connections between class issues and morality issues. While class is associated with inequalities (Gibson, 2003:774), it perpetuates issues of immorality because incidences of nepotism happen in this kind of a context. Considering the events in the park where Mda's *Our Lady of Benoni's* Professor, the Seller of laughter and the others reside, the study argues that in a case where there are economic hierarchical inequalities, a character such as Professor may unduly benefit from an ordinary individual such as the Seller because he [Professor] perceived as the bread winner at the park. Also, the other characters may feel compelled to deliver to some of his unfair requests whenever they seek a favour from him because of the power and the position that he holds at the park. This is deemed to be corruption in this study, and any corrupt act is classified as immoral because immoral acts are not acceptable in societies, neither is corruption. Therefore, this study concludes that it is rather complex to study either of the three themes namely morality, corruption and class in isolation.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

As a researcher in the field of English Studies in Literature, I have expressed the findings in the three contemporary dramas of post-Apartheid concerned in this study and have shared my views; therefore, I extend an invitation to any English Studies Literature critic or student to further this study in a case whereby gaps are seen.

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